

Houston Graduate School of Theology

**Moving the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in
Crocket, Texas, toward a Missional Mindset**

A Project Report Summited to the Faculty
for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

By

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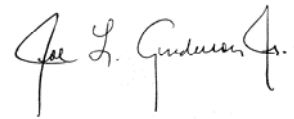
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Thank you to the Mt. Olive Church Family

Abstract

This ministry project addresses a need for missional transformation within the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas. A need for missional change comes from observing a spiritual, emotional, and social disconnect between Mt. Olive and the surrounding residents. The hope was to inspire change from a traditional format of ministry activity to divinely inspired ministry by introducing the congregation to missional life, exploring biblical and theological origins of mission. Going through a five-step missional change model from Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk's *The Missional Leader* was to stimulate missional change through awareness, understanding, evaluation, experimentation, and commitment.

Chapter I

Introduction

The pastoral leader is deeply concerned about the local church and surrounding community. This concern is based on ministry experience, observing a vast spiritual divide between the church and the local neighborhood. Four realities have become evident. First, there is a frustration among church members due to failing efforts to numerically grow their congregation. Second, theological schools and denominations are beginning to take notice that training leaders for ministry in traditional ways is ineffective in solving this problem. Third, local communities do not see the church as a spiritual outpost for their own spiritual, social, and economic needs. Fourth, the church's view of missions is more traditional, following denominational practices, as opposed to Holy Spirit-oriented. This is seen firsthand in the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas (hereafter Mt. Olive or MOMBC).

Many Protestant, African-American, and Baptist churches advertise the title "Missionary" Baptist Church. The problem with this is that, despite the title "missionary," congregations show no evidence of a missional lifestyle based on the term's theological intention. Therefore, due to this concern, Christian congregations have lost effectiveness in their mission witness to the surrounding community.

As a result of this, especially in rural African-American communities, the church is regarded as irrelevant. Therefore, a "missional" approach has been studied in recent

decades as a spiritual antidote to this problem. The key for the Christian church is to revisit the theological and biblical content of mission from scripture. In the missional life, Christians allow the Holy Spirit to become the “drum major” to whose beat the church marches. The church needs to investigate missional theology because it encourages them to embrace a missional mindset. Prior to becoming a pastor in the East Texas area, the leader saw a growing pathology in the community. While serving three years as pastor of evangelism at the Joy Tabernacle Baptist Church, an astonishing disinterest was discovered for the neighborhood church among the community residents. After assuming the pastoral leadership of MOMBC, observations ensued of both the congregation and its African-American community. Although the Mt. Olive congregation is in a rural setting, there exists a spiritual and social distance between the community churches and neighborhood residents.

The goal of this project was to lead the MOMBC into a missional mindset by forming a missional team. The purpose of this missional team was to serve the neighborhood residents in the Pine Ridge community effectively by actively demonstrating God’s love toward them. Love is key, and actively visiting and getting involved with the spiritual and social issues that the neighborhood was facing allowed the church to reflect God’s caring love. Patrick Franklin calls this God’s sending love, writing, “The God who sends is the God of Love. If we are called to participate in the mission of God then we are called also, and more fundamentally, to participate in the

love of God.”¹ Franklin further quotes David Bosch, “Mission has its origin in the heart of God.”²

The same love that moves God to missional activity also propels the church. It impels the people of God to serve with the primary understanding, and God directs the church on how best to serve. Chun-Ho Youn quotes David Bosch to make the case for this, “The meaning of *missio Dei* (mission of God) theology makes it explicit that it is not the church of humanity, but God is the primary agent of mission. Only when God uses the church as a tool for God’s missionary activity may the church’s activity be called missionary.”³

Projects Outcome and Assessments

Without a missional mindset, the premise of the project was that the congregation would not reflect a true sense of mission. An attempt was made by the pastor and the leadership of Mt. Olive to facilitate a five-step exercise to create a missional lifestyle. This change formula is outlined in Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk’s *The Missional Leader*.⁴ The change process involves group discussions, which comprised the first step of the project. The idea was to guide Mt. Olive through a change process, moving them toward missional change. The group discussions were designed to help stimulate this.

1. Patrick S. Franklin, “The God Who Sends is the God Who Loves: Mission as Participating in the Ecstatic Love of the Triune God,” *Didaskalia*, 28 (2017–2018): 75–95.

2. Ibid.

3. Chun-Ho Youn, “*Missio Dei, Trinitatis and Missio Ecclesiae*: A Public Theological Perspective,” *International Review of Mission* (World Council of Churches) 107, no. 1 (Jun 2018): 225–39.

4. Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020).

The discussions helped Mt. Olive step off a metaphorical roller coaster, allowing for self-reflection. Through the discussions, Mt. Olive then sought to measure ministry in light of scripture. The spiritual disciplines of praise and prayer were encouraged to create a comfortable social climate for open dialogue. The dialogues were to help Mt. Olive measure its spiritual and scriptural purpose in light of the Bible. The spiritual disciplines were introduced through the discussions. The group discussions, especially the first two stages (awareness, understanding) were not rushed. After the first two stages, leadership evaluated the discussions to detect evolution in the church's mindset. During this period, spiritual bonding, enthusiasm, interest, and commitment were measured and evaluated. The desired outcome was that congregational interest would grow to motivate missional change.

The second step of the project comprised a lesson plan that was theologically and biblically oriented. This was necessary for Mt. Olive so that they would understand their place in the spiritual protocol of mission. The desired outcome from conducting the discussions, spiritual disciplines, and Bible study was that a missional mindset would evolve in Mt. Olive.

For the third step, the congregation formed into a missional ministry team. Through the course of this project, the ministry team became emergently motivated, seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit. The strength of this team was birthed and sustained in prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. The desired outcome from the spiritual disciplines associated with the ministry team process was to ensure two things—spiritual unity and learning to discern the will of God together.

This team was divided into two primary groups. The first group consisted of an exploratory outreach team. The second group was formed into a prayer team. Gauging the impact of this missional transformation period was planned for at least three to four months of supervised observation. What followed was two weeks of preparation to begin engaging in a three-month outreach program in the Pine Ridge area.

There were several reasons for this outreach exercise. The first was for members of the exploratory team to reacquaint themselves in the neighborhood with their presence. The prayer team prayed for good dialogue between the team and the Pine Ridge people. A key factor of this communication exercise was to listen and learn the concerns of the neighborhood. The team then engaged, without any preconceived ideas, about how to address community needs through learning what was needed to minister to them. During this process, the team, in prayer and meditation, sought the Holy Spirit to learn the specific ways to be of help. The goal was to regain the neighborhood's confidence in the church. The plan was for the team to do this missionally by living out the church's God-intended calling.

The Mt. Olive Baptist Church Setting

The pastoral leadership closely observed the attitudes of the MOMBC members. Mt. Olive was a church filled with good, loving people, yet there was a visual spiritual stagnation involving its mission to community. An African-American congregation, the church had a total of forty members. This rural congregation was located approximately five miles outside the town of Crockett but within its jurisdiction. Crockett's population was 6,950 residents. The entire membership lived within town except for four members, three of whom lived in the town of Magnolia and the other in Houston. The

congregation's ministerial structure was as follows. The diaconate consisted of four ordained deacons, one church secretary, one Sunday school superintendent, one Sunday school clerk, two financial officers, and an administrative board of five people.

During much of its history, Mt. Olive conducted worship only twice a month, which was normal for most rural African-American churches in East Texas. In 1990, however, the congregation decided to meet weekly. Bible study, which was usually scheduled for Wednesday nights, was changed due to the work schedule of the pastor who at the time was bi-vocational. Therefore, Bible study took the place of Sunday school and was broken up into two groups—adult and youth. All teens attended the adult class, and ages five to twelve years attended the youth group. In 2010, the pastor formed an outreach ministry program that was operated by eight people. The area of operation was the Pine Ridge community projects—a housing community within a low-income, African-American neighborhood.

The objective of the outreach was to minister to the residents by attempting to address their needs. At first, this outreach program served as a fact-finding experiment for pastoral leadership. There were at least fifteen African-American congregations within the Crockett area; however, Mt. Olive was the only one to date to minister in this way. This aroused an inward restlessness in the leadership that a change in ministry was necessary, opposed to the way the church previously ministered to people. A change would also be needed in the way the church members ministered to each other. Leadership observed that Mt. Olive's practice of mission resulted mostly in rendering financial aid to its sick and elderly members. Church ministry of any kind extended to only a few outside of the membership.

The pastor felt that the Holy Spirit wanted to birth a renewal in Mt. Olive and the leadership regarding the gospel mandate to the “Great Commission.” Soul searching first led the pastor to examine his mental model of church ministry in relation to the community. If Mt. Olive was going to be effective in ministry, the pastor believed the church needed a new theological perspective and ecclesiological understanding of mission.

Pastor’s Personal History of Ministry

The writer was in gospel ministry for over forty-five years. His church memberships included the Mt. Herman Missionary Baptist Church, Holy Assembly Baptist Church, and the Joy Baptist Tabernacle, which is now called the Genesis Church. At age fourteen, he committed his life to Christ and announced his call to the gospel ministry at age sixteen. Announcing the call to preach at an early age is not uncommon in most African-American Baptist churches. At Mt. Hermon Missionary Baptist Church, he served in the youth program and as assistant aid to the pastor. In 1977, the pastor, along with the Mt. Herman Congregation, decided to publicly ordain him into the gospel ministry.

After graduation, at age eighteen, he entered the U. S. Army. During his first fourteen months of military service, he became a member of the Holy Assembly Baptist Church in Marina, California, and became an assistant to the pastor. The writer was honorably discharged from military service in 1979 and reunited with the Mt. Herman family. In 1986, he moved his membership to Joy Baptist Tabernacle. The pastor of the Joy congregation formally recognized his call to ministry and licensed him in the year 1999.

In 2006, the writer was publicly set aside and ordained to serve as Assistant Pastor for Evangelism. Previously, he served as a youth Bible teacher over a twenty-year period before becoming the assistant pastor for evangelistic ministry. He also served as Intercessory Prayer Leader and Youth Pastor for one year. In March 2010, the writer accepted the call to become pastor of the MOMBC in Crockett, Texas.

New Mental Ideology that Stimulates Change

If the church were willing to embrace a missional mindset, it would necessitate a change in her mental model of ministry. To enable Mt. Olive to understand this path to change, the pastor's mental model was shared with the congregation.

After twenty-five years of ministry, the pastor's understanding of the relationship between the church and its mission took on new imagery that focused on a spiritual void that existed between the local church and the community around it. African-American churches no longer viewed the church as a source of spiritual encouragement and a catalyst to address the social issues the community faces. This problem existed due to the inability of the church to comprehend and communicate with neighborhood residents. The incapability to communicate stemmed from a lack of presence among people who lived near the church. The leader believed the church had acquired this problem based on a drift from the theological foundation of missional intent and understanding their ecclesiological purpose.

During the pastor's tenure at Mt. Olive, it was concluded that the congregation's mental model of ministry was based on the traditional view of the National Baptist Convention's rendering of the local church covenant document. The wording of this covenant is as follows:

National Baptist Convention USA Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, toward its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we can engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.⁵

The Baptist Church Covenant (hereafter, BCC) above was written by John Newton Brown in 1853. It presently serves as the standard code of spiritual and moral

5. Marshall Davis, *The Baptist Church Covenant: Its History and Meaning* (Marshall Davis, 2013), 4–5.

conduct for most Baptist denominations, especially Black Baptist churches in East Texas. Each paragraph of the covenant is thoroughly explained in Marshall Davis's reediting in the church covenant manual. During his tenure as pastoral leader, the pastor discovered that this covenant left an indelible imprint on Mt. Olive's mental concept of mission.

In general, the covenant was based on biblical scripture on how Christians conduct themselves with each other. The problem, however, was that the covenant was spiritually inclusive. It fostered a bonding of spiritual community among Christian brethren but left no room for the Holy Spirit to lead the ecclesiastical order for which it was designed. In a missional sense, the congregation did not concentrate on the communities where they lived. There were two primary concerns. First, congregational attendance was going down because they had lost their sense of purpose for which the Lord Jesus commissioned them. Second, especially in neighborhoods like Pine Ridge in Crockett, the church could not effectively minister to them because they were estranged and did not know how to connect.

The pastor believed that a missional transformation was the only way to affect these challenges. A missional mindset led to less focus on the congregation and more on God's intent. Missional evolution allowed the congregation to seek and explore the will of God together. To develop a missional readiness, both pastor and congregation had to be willing to seek change. The key for Mt. Olive to change included both seeking and surrendering to the will and power of the Holy Spirit. The church had to learn to be open to divine inspiration, to explore, and to reach in and beyond the congregation to effectively serve people. Both pastor and Mt. Olive would be required to go through a radical transformation. It was a transformation that could not be rushed; rather, the

congregation would be given time to comprehend, adjust, and commit to the process to missional change, along with the acknowledgement in reference to the necessity of understanding and evaluation of one's mental model. It was essential in this study to provide a theological and biblical foundation that supported missional change. The study also provided evidence from research in African-American churches and the communities how they were called to serve along with why missional life was the best way to minister to both church and community.

Seminary studies in "missional terminology" ignited an urge to reinvestigate these issues from a theological and biblical approach as opposed to traditional Baptist visualization. This foundational research follows.

Chapter II

Theological, Biblical, and Practical Foundations

The objective of this chapter was to establish theological and biblical foundations that supported why missional life was better suited for the MOMBC family. Theological and biblical studies were necessary to show that the term “mission” refers to that which is divinely inspired. The pastoral leader presented valid theological and biblical research to trace the origin of mission. This study provided research from Christian theologians and biblical scholars to give theological and historical documentation that related to missional witness. The term “missional” represents a changed relationship between the church and its local context, which is about a renewed understanding of the church identity in God.¹ This study revealed that a missional lifestyle at its source was theological and that the Bible documents the narrative of the God of mission in action with humanity.

It was the writer’s intent to investigate the downward trend of the effective witness of African-American churches in their communities. The reason for this was to show that missional instruction could be an effective means of witness in Black neighborhoods. While unfolding theological, biblical, and African-American research about the concept of “missional,” another topic was germane to this study. Due to God’s kingly nature, it was essential to involve the concept “kingdom of God” and its relevance in the biblical and African-American portions of this research.

1. Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 1.

Theological Foundations

The road to Christian's missional transformation lies in understanding the origin of the subject. Followers of Jesus must become cognizant that "missional" refers to God initiating his love, presence, authority, and power in the universe. The Christian church must regain sight of this truth for several reasons; for example, that Christians may be fully aware of their active place in the commission given to them by Jesus. Another reason is so that they will not lean to their own understanding in conducting the work God, but rather be able to learn, discern, and comply with the will of the Holy Spirit on how best to serve in community.

Mission's Theological Origin

The Bible teaches that God is the creator of all things. Thus, being creator, God is the first to initiate an active role in the life of all human existence. This missional movement is first seen within the triune Godhead (the Trinity). The point is that God is the first responder to anything involving human life. Evidence can be found within the Trinity as a way to help understand God as being the first to initiate. In Roger Olson's *The Story of Christianity*, he documents the teachings of medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas on God and causation, to establish God as the "first cause" of things. Aquinas concluded that everything within the universe is caused, and there must be a "first efficient cause," which is God.²

This information is important because it validates God making the first move in the spiritual, physical, and social aspects of his human creation. It is also worthwhile to note from Aquinas's theological view, that within the triune Godhead, God the Father

2. Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 338.

moves “first.” The conclusion drawn from Aquinas’s thought on causation is that God the Father makes the first move in the plan of salvation.

To follow the concept that missional transformation is first initiated by God, it will be necessary to move past Aquinas’s theological claim of causation. Within the Trinity, based on causation, there is a shifting in missional activity. There is a theological momentum in which God’s mission unfolds. Missional activity, again, is about “sending.” Many theological scholars support the view that the term “sending” is evident in the Trinity. In their book, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile use theological research taken from Francis DuBose’s book, *The God Who Sends*. Dubose uses theologian Karl Barth’s trinitarian perspective that missional foremost involves a God who sends. Dubose quotes Barth explaining theology in view of Western trinitarian thought:

Barth had reclaimed from this tradition an understanding of the classical meaning of mission as the *sending* of God, which originates in the relations of the Trinity within the divine community. Dubose explicitly acknowledges his debt to Barth as he proceeds to develop a fuller scriptural argument that the Triune Godhead is a sending God, and that mission needs to be understood as originating from within God.³

Both Van Gelder and Zscheile conclude from Dubose’s studies of Barth’s Trinitarian thought, that a momentum of redemptive sending happens, beginning with God the Father sending the Son, and God the Son sending the Holy Spirit.⁴ Another valid note is that missional activity originates within the Trinity. Andreas Kostenberger expounds on a course of thought that explores how each member within the Trinity, in distinct ways,

3. Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 44–5.

4. *Ibid.*, 27.

conducts its mission for the salvation of all humanity, but all are united in the cause.

Kostenberger connects mission inside the scope of trinitarian theology by saying,

Not only are the three persons of the Godhead united in this mission, the presentation of Father, Son, and Spirit in John's gospel—John's trinitarian theology—is clearly missiologically constrained. Rather than being one of several aspects or implications of John's trinitarian theology, mission was shown to be the nexus and focal point of his presentation of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, both individually and in relation to another. Hence it can truly be said that not only was John's mission theology trinitarian, which is a significant statement, but that his trinitarian teaching is part of his mission theology.⁵

Since mission is about sending, in trinitarian theology, what is learned is that it is God who sends. The relationship between the Father and Son is connected for the sake of human redemption. The Father and Son, along with the Spirit, work together for the benefit of mankind. These are fundamental truths that the Christian church must reclaim. This revelatory perspective will foster a sense of “togetherness” that will be essential for the church. It brings the church to a true awareness of her ecclesiastically given responsibilities as followers of Jesus. The church learns in the scope of trinitarian theology that working together will be absolute in mission. It is the Holy Spirit through Jesus who is the “drum major” to whom the church must move to serve community. The theology behind this, Kostenberger adds, is that “the relationships between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are presented in John's gospel within a clearly defined relational as well as salvation-historical framework. In relational terms, it is the Father who sends the Son, not the Son the Father. Likewise, it is the Father and the Son, who send the Spirit rather than vice versa.”⁶

5. Andreas J. A. Kostenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 546.

6. Ibid.

It becomes more obvious that missional theology is God-centered, and this truth must always be the main focus of the church. Any action the Christian believer does in mission should be taken after reflecting upon divine inspiration. Understanding mission from this theological core is necessary for the church. The goal of this chapter was to provide a firm theological foundation essential to missional witness. Due to changing times in various beliefs and culture, the fundamental truths of theology must not be vacated but rather become translatable. Darrell Guder comments from David Bosch's writings confirming the necessity of a solid foundation in the theology for mission:

The theology of the "*missio Dei*" (mission of God), defines the church within the framework of the doctrine of the Triune God. David Bosch has described this theological consensus succinctly, explaining that mission is "understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It was thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include another "movement": Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.

Therefore, within the framework of any theological approach to mission, the church must be the reflection of God in the community. God's mission demonstrates love, grace, mercy, righteousness, and justice, which are the spiritual traits that must embody the church. Guder comments further to this point.

The theology of the *missio Dei* is making clear that our ecclesiology if it is truly to be the doctrine for the church that is continuing the apostolic witness, must be rooted in God's nature purpose and action. It must be developed out of the mission of God as the one who calls and empowers His people to be the sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's new order under the lordship of Jesus Christ.⁷

Simon Chan takes a step further to reveal the purpose of mission within the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to Chan, are in communion, albeit in "sending activity." Before Genesis 3 recorded mankind's fall from grace, they walked in

7. Darrell L. A. Guder, *Call to Witness, Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 73–4.

communion with God. The theological point is that God moves to restore what was lost in the fall. Therefore, the fall of humanity propels God into mission to restore communion with mankind. Christians must follow the divine example (communion), making them distinct in nature and character. This will establish their validity as the residents of the kingdom of God, who communicate the gospel of Jesus wherever the Spirit leads. Chan notes, “I think missional theology is a very positive development. But some missional theology has not gone far enough. It has not asked, what is the mission of the Trinity? And the answer to that is communion. Ultimately, all things are to be brought back into communion with the Triune God. Communion is the ultimate end, not mission.”⁸

Johannes Swart and co-authors make a noteworthy observation of a participation of mission, within the Trinity. This is important because it serves the purpose of demonstrating to the church the distinctive role each member plays in the salvation of mankind. Furthermore, it serves as a model that the church participates with God in his mission involving humanity. The body of Christ must work together discerning the will of God as they actively participate serving the neighborhood. This theological role model for the church signals unity. Christians united, working together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will prepare themselves for effective ministry. The article highlights the participation, working together, for humanity’s salvation. It is through a united effort in the Trinity that the church is born. Swart et al., write:

We have argued for an understanding of the Triune God that is open to the participation of the world and the church. Because God is triune, in that God exists as the communion of persons identified as the *dramas dei personae* of salvation history, there is participation in the Triune God, who, as Father, Son, and Spirit, engages the world and calls into being the church. The church is

8. Simon Chan, “The Mission of the Trinity,” *Christianity Today* 51, no. 6 (2007): 48.

specified in this unfolding drama as the company of sinners brought before the Father in the crucifixion of Jesus and justified through the resurrection. The cross thus confirms, as the participants at Willingen saw, God's solidarity with sinful humanity, and, therefore, the solidarity of the church and the world.⁹

The key, again, is congregations working together in missional activity attempting to be of value to their neighborhoods. Churches that labor in unity become spiritually distinctive in their labor settings in that they bear God's loving presence. Each believer may bring different giftings, but, when they work together, they reflect the Trinity. When the church mirrors God's image, people do not see the church; rather, they see God reaching out to them through the body of Christ.

This point must become an indelible fact in missional transformation in any Christian congregation. It is necessary to point out the motivating factor of trinitarian activity in response to humanity, which is love. Love is the unconditional attribute of God that propels the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinctive roles in the salvation of mankind, to move in the effort of human redemption. The theological base for this train of thought comes from Patrick Franklin's article in which he uses Augustinian theology to make his point. He notes, "The insight that God's love led Augustine to formulate his love mutual model of the Trinity. According to Augustine's mutual love model, the Father eternally generates the Son (without beginning or end) and the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son and subsists as their mutual love."¹⁰

9. Johannes Swart, Gerhardus Jacobus, Scott J. Hagley, John Ogren, Mark Love, "Toward a Missional Theology of Participation: Ecumenical Reflection on Contributions to Trinity, Mission, and Church," *Missiology* 37, no.1 (2009): 85.

10. Patrick Franklin, "The God Who Sends is the God Who Loves," *Didaskalia* 28, 2018: 80.

Christians, who enlist themselves in a continual process of radical transformation toward a missional mindset, must be prepared to change. This means that they learn to view community and culture differently, seeing them as God sees them. Trinitarian theology reveals the stimulating power behind mission to the church, which is commissioned to amplify the redemptive power of God, which is love. Christians, who seek missional transformation, must be cognizant of the missional model set forth within the triune Godhead.

This means that, for the church to reflect the image of God, they understand that its reflection is of love, unity, communion, and participation. Reflecting the image of God to serve humanity is to live from this perspective. It is a “love” for God and others, which results in “communion,” an intimate bonding and sharing in related things. Also, it is unity and participation—uniting and working together for the same goal. It is out of the salvation word of the Trinity that the church has become the *ecclesia* (called out) for mission. Franklin writes in response to this about the existence and purpose of the church,

The church exists for our own sake (as an end) because of God’s missional intention is to establish a new creation, a community of love and new life, in which people live in restored communion with God and one another. Yet the church also exists for the world (instrumentally) (as a means), the “church for others” its Lord Jesus Christ, the “man for others,” is conforming it to His image, which includes being free for others and for the world. The church exists to experience and share the reconciliation and intimate communion the gospel makes possible; everything it is and does bears witness to this.¹¹

A missional lifestyle is rooted in a sound theological foundation. To simply proceed into the work of mission without sound theological relevance is to leave congregations with the understanding that it is the task of the church. It is ambiguous

11. Franklin, “The God Who Sends is the God Who Loves,” 85.

because it leaves the church with the thought pattern that mission is exclusively done by the church and not God through them. To live a missional lifestyle is to be divinely inspired and led. This allows for the church to transform from reactive to emergent. Darrell Guder uses words such as “retooling” and “renewal” to explain the systemic concerns with present scope of the Christian church doing mission. The problem is that churches brainstorm for solutions for attendance and attractiveness. Christians must convert to the theological prototype of mission—a theological conversion to the Spirit, to be open and to allow God to control the work of mission in the church. Guder writes,

I find more and more reasons to insist that the challenge before us is not one merely of renewal or retooling, but of conversion—conversion of the church to its radically simple missional vocation. Since conversion is the work of the God’s Spirit and not under our control, our theological formation for apostolic vocation must be done in a posture of patient and confident prayer.¹²

It will be necessary to employ the spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, and fellowship for missional change. The biblical narrative makes this crystal clear from the Old Testament, in the book of Proverbs, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5–6, KJV).¹³ Missional theology is important, and it must be understood that the church is not the initiator of mission but rather has been invited to participate in the mission work of God. Guder recalls the World Council of Churches at Willingen, where church leaders were in deep discussion concerning the theology of mission in order to better prepare churches for missionary work. The council moved to the

12. Darrell L. Guder, “*Missio Dei*: Intergrading Theological Formation for Apostolic Vocation,” *Missiology* 37, no. 40 (2009): 73.

13. Unless otherwise noted, the primary version used will be the King James Version (KJV).

conclusion that mission was more theological in origin as opposed to a task exclusively belonging to the church. He writes,

Willingen (World Council of Churches) began to flesh out a new model. It recognized that the church could be neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. God's salvific work precedes both the church and mission. We should not subordinate mission to the church nor church to mission; both should rather be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*. The church changes from being the sender to the one being sent.¹⁴

The core theme of missional theology reveals that God makes the first move to initiate his plan of salvation for the world. Christians must realize that they, too, have been called to join with God, serving as ambassadors for Christ. As residents of God's kingdom under the Lordship of Jesus, the mission is to demonstrate as well as to proclaim the gospel to others. Even so, while Christendom exists among followers of Jesus, there are others within society who are estranged, whose theology is different, based on culture or an evolving one. Missional theology has the ability to transcend into other cultures and ideology and reveal the God of salvation. The believer is responsible to take the gospel message and connect with unbelievers. Cornelis Haak makes the missional objective clear, "One's missional approach is all about how to connect with unbelievers, how to communicate at their level of understanding, how to adjust the gospel message to their vocabulary so as to lead them to the crucified Lord Jesus Christ and confront them with the gospel claim."¹⁵

The critical point of Haak's reasoning is clarity of the gospel to others. This cannot happen without dwelling among people, listening, and learning from them. It

14. Darrell J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003), 370.

15. Cornelis J. Haak, "The Missional Approach," *Calvin Theological Journal* 44 (2009): 37.

simply means the believer must learn to communicate the gospel. For it is Christians who carry within them the living Jesus, along with his messages of love and restoration. The believer must connect with community, adjusting theology that flows from apostolic thought, so it can be understood by those with whom the gospel is shared.

Two things must be noted in missional theology; first, is the understanding that it is theological by design (God Inspired). This first point helps the church alleviate the tendency of harboring an ecclesiological complex to mission as a design of the church. This study's theological position is accepting the *missio Dei* reality; therefore, it is the church working with God in his mission. Darrell Guder stresses this point in view of missional theology connecting it to trinitarian thought.

Trinitarian theology has come to the center of discussion as a theology of the “mission of God” (*missio Dei*) has become the guiding consensus. God the Father sends God the Son to carry out and complete the work of healing and reconciliation; God the Father, the Son send the Holy Spirit, who gathers, empowers, and sends the confessing community as God's missionary people “to be Christ witnesses” (Acts 1:8).¹⁶

The second point is that the Gospel message that God declares through the church is translatable. It is essential that the gospel of Jesus be understood for the purpose of edification. Jacob Rodriguez studies the theology of second-century theologian Irenaeus, who necessitated that missional theology is translatable. Irenaeus established a theological foundation of translatability based on the church's first encounter with the Holy Spirit. He concluded that when the Holy Spirit empowered the believers in the upper room, they were able to translate the gospel in the foreign languages of those who

16. Darrell L. Guder, “Worthy Living: Work and Witness from the Perspective of Missional Church Theology,” *Word & World* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 425.

came to observe Pentecost. According to Rodriguez, Irenaeus mentioned how the gospel of Jesus spread in his lifetime because of its translation into other languages:

Irenaeus also relates the work of the Spirit of the multiplicity of languages among the people of God. Speaking particularly of Pentecost, Irenaeus says that the “all leading Spirit . . . came down, after the ascension of the Lord . . . having authority to permit all nations to enter into life and into the opening of the new covenant.” By the Spirit’s empowering, the nations, having the same mind, in all languages, made hymns to God, as the Spirit brought the separate tribes into unity and offered the first fruits of all nations to the Father.¹⁷

The translatability of missional theology that Rodriguez drew from Irenaeus’s concept of mission is relevant to this study. Although, in the era of Irenaeus, this ability was confined to the diversity of language barriers, it can be applied to culture. Within missional theology, there is the necessity to translate theology—the gospel, which is the good news concerning Jesus Christ—to the present-day community. In communities with diverse cultures, due to the media’s influence on younger generations, the gospel in its Judeo-Christian form of communication has become foreign to them. Diverse cultures and evolving generations have their own way of living, processing, and communicating. Translatability of the gospel communicates the Jesus of scripture in a way that they can comprehend.

From observation, in the traditional form of Christian worship, congregation attendance is numerically low. The reason is that churches are now in competition with other social venues. These social settings have arrested the attention of many young people. Within diverse culture and alternative social atmospheres, the gospel under the empowering of the Holy Spirit must invade the world of others. Germane to this point, Tite Tienou and Paul Hiebert note a valuable theological truth in Christian mission that

17. Jacob Rodriguez, “Irenaeus’s Missional Theology: Global Christian Perspectives from an Ancient Missionary Theologian,” *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 59, no.1 (2016): 137.

should not be overlooked. It is essential that the church be open to the Holy Spirit.

“Missional” means that the church must look through a divine lens to learn how best to serve. To do this is to understand the relevant fact that God is in control. He is in the driver’s seat of any missional endeavor. “We have divine revelation that shows us truth, how God, not we, see things. But we must remember our theologies are our human understandings of that revelation done by humans using human languages living in that particular context, and therefore should never be equated one-to-one with divine revelation.”¹⁸

Missional theology generally clarifies that God, through the redemptive work of Jesus and the empowering of the Spirit, commissions Christians to participate in his mission to humanity. Missional theology prepares congregations to become more emergent in nature, going through an ongoing transformation. The church seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit, becoming open to creativity. In saying this, Tienou and Hiebert give a bullet-point illustration on the dynamics of missional theology. Within this illustration are exploratory components that feature learning through research and observation. It is worth mentioning that these points are valuable when there is an openness to the Holy Spirit. The authors explain missional components under the headings of phenomenology, ontology, and missiology.

Phenomenology studies a situation as people see it, seeks to understand how people see it, and develops an “etic” comparative frame to compare and evaluate different views. Ontology comprises the “reality” check on the facts, the study of scriptural teachings on the case, and the evaluation and decisions made on the case. Missiology is

18. Tite Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, “Missional Theology,” *Missiology* 34, no. 2 (2006): 230.

the act on the immediate case and the beginning of the procedure to deal with the underlying issues in the long run.¹⁹ In conclusion, any mission endeavor must be given careful consideration and preparation. In this case, observation, study, and planning, along with theological and biblical foundations should ensure that a church's missional activity is God-centered. The report now turns to a focus on biblical foundations.

Biblical Foundations

Biblical narratives comprise the textbook of study leading toward a missional lifestyle. The Bible unfolds a written portfolio of Old and New Testament writings given to human authors under the unction of the Holy Spirit that tells the story of human history and of God interacting with his creation. After laying the groundwork that missional ministry is theologically conceived, the Bible, along with the biblical scholars, offers valuable insight into missional activity. The Bible reveals God conducting his mission toward humanity for the purpose of communion, prosperity, redemption, and liberty. In this study, the scriptures and references provide insight into the source from which missional ministry originates throughout the creation story to the early church.

The Old Testament reveals the intent of God's mission to the world. In truth, it is God's purpose to rule his world with his human subjects mirroring his attributes (love, goodness, righteousness, justice, and mercy) to maintain a harmonious atmosphere of coexistence with one another. Genesis 3, however, reveals a pivotal reality in the life of humanity. This reality shows a disruption of communion between the Creator and his creation. God's intent seems apparent—that as human population expands, they would then exemplify his divine qualities and live in harmony. Evidence of missional language

19. Tienou and Hiebert, "Missional Theology," 227.

can be found in Genesis 1–3. This necessitates new terminology that must be explored from a biblical perspective. The terms “missional,” “kingdom of God,” and “the gospel” are interrelated in both the Old and New Testaments.

The first humans were created from material substance (dust), but in God’s image, reflecting God’s reign in the earth. Due to the fall of humanity, as recorded in Genesis 3, their understanding of God was blurred and marred because of disobedience. Humanity now had to take the elementary course to relearn who truly was their leader and ruler. References will show that God’s mission is to govern the earth through humanity, but sin blurs the spiritual qualities within man. Because of this, mankind cannot mirror the image of God in life. Each term, “kingdom of God,” “gospel,” and “missional,” represents the reality in which, under God’s rulership, every individual and all creation thrive.

God’s people are to live in harmony with him and with each other. Under the leadership of God, the earth forever stands to be the beneficiary of his love, grace, mercy, and prosperity. Humans live as God’s earthly stewards. The missional relevance in the creation account involves God-given responsibilities to mankind. As caretakers of the planet, their mission is to live and reciprocate the Godlike qualities within them, with one another. Humanity is to exercise this missional lifestyle under freewill. Gilbert Pierre not only notes that humans are partners with God in caring for and governing the earth, but they are at liberty to choose to do so. Their will is spiritually energized and influenced by communion with God.

According to Genesis 1, the creation of the universe is the outcome of God’s peaceful and benevolent intent. There is no hint whatsoever of divine conflict, war, or violence directed at humanity. The world is the expression of God’s goodness toward the human race and is created for its benefit. Human beings are not created to serve as slaves, but to live as God’s representatives (Gen. 1:26–31) and partners in shaping and managing the world (Gen. 2:15–17). Because they are

made in the image of God, human beings are endowed with intrinsic value and dignity (Gen. 9:6). They are not portrayed as the helpless victims of cosmic powers that inexorably shape their destiny. Every human is held accountable for their actions. This affirms that all men must walk in human dignity and live morally responsible, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

Genesis confirms another important point: God's ownership. Since the earth is the Lord's, he has the sovereign right to rule. The universe is God's kingdom by virtue of the fact that he is the creator. This truth is written in Genesis 1. The creation account outlines in detail the formation of all created things, spoken into existence by the Creator. God first established a social and political system in the territories of the earth. Man's evolutionary journey of expansion in the land, throughout history, is revealed in the Bible. It is providential or by divine decree that one perceives who dwells where. The premise that is drawn is that various biblical narratives lead to the kingship of God. Yet, it is Genesis 1, from a biblical and theological perspective, that substantiates the kingdom of God on earth. Bruce Reichenbach points to God's authoritative right due to the creation of the earth and humanity which inhabits it.

Since the concept of the land, understood not only geographically but politically and socially, is central to the OT, and since the concept of an absolute monarchy underlies God covenantal allocation, and since God has a right to the land (His Kingdom) by virtue of His creation of it, the creation account (Gen. 1:1–2:3) can be properly understood as the narrative of God establishing His kingdom. The first creation account is a carefully crafted narrative of an ordered series of acts by which God by royal decree brings into being His territory and establishes all things with their proper function. The narrative begins with God's creation of the "heavens and the earth," by which phrase the author indicates that the entire universe is properly God's domain. Further, the author emphasizes who it is that creates the kingdom by His use of *bara*, which elsewhere in the OT is used only in respect to divine activity. God alone does the kingdom building.²¹

20. Pierre Gilbert, "The Missional Relevance of Genesis 1-3," *Directions* 43, no. 1 (Spr 2014): 54.

21. Bruce Reichenbach, "Genesis 1 As a Theological-Political Narrative of Kingdom Establishment," *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 13, No 1. 2003 56–7.

In reference to mission, the Genesis 1 account explores God's intent in the creation of the world. Mission can be defined as a task; God first creates a habitable place for human dwelling. Mankind became partners with God, exercising dominion in the earth, reflecting God's image so that there was harmony and unity in the world. After Genesis 3, humanity's spiritual core became dark, and its moral compass navigated opposite of the true God. The evidence of this is recorded in biblical history. The biblical narratives unveil the depravity to which humanity succumbed.

The Genesis story of human creation reveals several things. It discloses that God is sovereign because he is Creator of the physical universe and of mankind. Furthermore, because God is Creator, the earth is his kingdom, and he has the right to rule. The first to inhabit God's earthly world were given the task to govern that world. After man's fall from grace, according to Genesis 3, God's mission was to reestablish within man his divine code of conduct. This code navigates toward the path of love, liberty, righteousness, justice, and a genuine moral concern for the overall welfare of others. It is with God's law living inside man that he governs the human species.

By divine interaction and revelation, God moved to make known his true nature and what was required from his human subjects. This was evident as God gave Moses the law by which the Israelites were to live. The core emphasis of the Mosaic law was in the Decalogue (Ten Commandments). The law reflected the nature and character of God, not only to Israel but to the nations of the earth. For the nations to see this reflection, however, God chose a nation to model it. Through the model of the seed of Abraham, God formed and chose the Israelites for this purpose. In Exodus 19, God revealed that he would use them to demonstrate a holy lifestyle among the nations of the earth. God said,

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priest and a holy nation” (Exod. 19:5–6, NIV). In Victor Hamilton’s *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, two perspectives draw from this passage, the latter of which validates Israel’s missional calling:

There are two possibilities for meaning here. First, priests enjoy a privileged relationship with God. They may enter His presence in a way that the laity cannot; they alone may go into the holy place, but laity cannot. If that’s the meaning, then “royalty/kingdom of priest” reinforces the significance of “unique treasure.” Because they are the Lord’s *sequella* (treasured), Israel is able to stand before God, to enter His presence, in a way no other people can. The other possibility, if we follow the Latin word for “priest” (*pontifex*, lit., (bridge-builder), the ministry of service is clear. Israel is a bridge between Yahweh and the nations.²²

After Israel’s conquest of the land of Canaan, they settled there. They inherited this land by divine promise. It was not long until the concept of being God’s model nation began to fade. The monarchical governments of neighboring countries appealed to the Hebrew people. Israel wanted a visible figurehead to rule them. The first evidence of this is found in the Old Testament narratives in the book of Judges. After Gideon’s military victory, the Israelites sought to make him their first king (Judg. 8:22). As the period of being ruled by judges was ending, Israel’s aspiration for a monarch grew stronger. Israel wanted a visible ruler as opposed to the invisible God who governed through the covenant he established (Mosaic Law) with them (1 Sam. 8:5-6). Wilhelm Hertzberg observes,

But he regards it as a negative factor that the desire of the elders for a king is a consequence of what they have seen in all the other nations. The word *goyim* is used here, stressing the non-Israelite, heathen element. With this concern, then, Israel departs from the special position to sink to the level of the others. As a

22. Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2011), 304.

result, Yahweh, to whom Samuel turns with this evil thing, interprets the people's request to mean that they wish to forsake him, the real king, just as they did at the time of the Exodus.²³

Understanding that the term “missional” is about the good news of God's kingdom, this study has documented God's intent to establish his rule and reign (kingdom) on the earth. He does this through his human subjects, who must model God's way of life among themselves. Their mission is to live an exemplary code of conduct centered within the character of God. The Old Testament reveals that the durability of living this way must come from within.

The prophet Jeremiah spoke prophetically of a new reality, how God rules humanity from within. The rulership that the prophet spoke of takes place not in the celestial world, but on earth. This meant that, for Israel to become standard bearers of God's holiness, they needed to change. This change had an eschatological forecast. As in the beginning, it was the mission of God to rule from within man's heart. Through the prophet, in Jer. 31:31–4, God reveals that the kingdom of God will govern the lifestyle of all humanity. Leslie Allen and Jennifer Cox exegete this passage to point to God's kingly rule transpiring on earth. “Instead of the people breaking the covenant, Yahweh would give the Torah, in the sense of the written revelation of the will of God of the covenant, an inner power. The writing on the heart of the human will contrast with an external writing of the tablets at Sinai or on scrolls.”²⁴

In truth, the Jeremiah text, from an exegetical point of view, focused on the spiritual transformation of Israel. Israel was God's choice to model his holiness to other

23. Wilhelm Hans Hertzberg, *1 and 2 Samuel Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 72.

24. Allen, Leslie, Cox Jennifer K, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, Presbyterian Publishing Corp, 356.

nations; however, the revelatory scope of God's intent gives a greater perspective. The missional observation is clear: God was signaling that, through Israel, he intended to draw all nations into his holiness. Israel was to model how humanity should live in the earth. This Old Testament perspective suggests that effective missional ministry must be eternalized in the soul of the believer. The prophet Jeremiah expounded on this more in chapter 29, prophesying to Israel about the captivity to which they would succumb due to their disobedience. Israel was encouraged by Jeremiah's prophecy to live their faith in the land where they were being held captive.

Jeremiah 29 may be exegeted this way in relation to missional content. Just as the Jews were exiled in a foreign land with people of different customs, they were still God's representatives. Wherever God's people resided, he was with them. In Jeremiah's prophecy, the children of Israel were told to embrace their cultural surroundings because they were part of the community, even though this was not their original home. The spiritual content of this would dictate that their (Israel's) spiritual devotion to God was a witness to a people who were estranged from him. As God calls all believers to pray for others, the Israelites were told to pray for their foreign neighbors. This was because the wellbeing of the Babylonian residents ensured the safety of Israel.

The missional focus here is that Christians must develop a genuine concern for community. Believers who would effectively serve the neighborhood must see themselves as part of it. The lesson of Jer. 29:7 suggests that believers that dwell or have interest in the city are called to the city. Gary Hall offers this perspective in reference to Jeremiah's declaration to Israel. "Several pioneering urban missiologists use Jeremiah 29 as a basic OT text for urban mission. Roger Greenway calls it a formula for the saints.

Robert Linthicum calls it one of the most profound ecclesiastical statements in scripture. Jer. 29:7 is the John 3:16 of urban Christians, a message to all the urban people of God.”²⁵

Missional: Transition from Old to New Testament Perspective

Missional activity is centered around the kingdom of God. The declaration of the coming kingdom is good news. Humanity had ventured off the holy and moral compass, and God moved through human history to bring them back on course. Thus far, this study documents theologically and biblically that it remains God’s mission to rule the human inhabitants of earth, which, as God, he has every right to do. The psalmists declare that he has this authority: “The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24). It is also understood, by divine sanction, that Israel was chosen to model God’s holiness among the nations, but their incessant passion to become as other nations was expressed in their desire for an earthly king.

Israel’s history of being ruled by men often caused them to lose sight of God. It is because of this that Israel was banished into exile as punishment for abandoning the spiritual practices found in the Mosaic law. There is, however, a spiritual forecast of hope, not just for Israel, but the entire world. God never abandoned his plan to rule over all creation. God himself would rule through a human figure, which 2 Samuel and Isa. 9:6 point out. These scriptures are in relation to Jesus the Messiah. Commentators of 2 Sam. 7:13 suggest the following:

In the post-exilic view of the chronicler, from a time when there was no king, the line is carefully, but still clearly, extended into the Messianic sphere. This interpretation is not arbitrary, but legitimate. Alt has rightly spoken of the

²⁵ Gary H. Hall, “Jeremiah 29: A Theological Foundation for Urban Mission,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spr. 2017): 59.

historical root of the expectation of the Messiah as simple as was suggestive. This is true not only in history and literature but also in theology.²⁶

The prophet Isaiah wrote several messianic texts, but Isa. 9:6 is of particular interest because it reveals the Messiah as the future ruler of the governments of the world. The information exegeted from this text suggests that the Messiah is human as well as divine. John Watts explains it this way: “In this, the NT follows the path laid out in the vision of Isaiah. Christian interpretation has found the appropriate place for the original meanings to be applied Christ’s second to reign in glory.”²⁷

Watts briefly interprets that Jesus is this messianic figure and that his kingdom is eschatological in scope. Yet, Jesus announced his messianic reign himself at the beginning of his earthly ministry, as recorded in the gospels, which is the guide to missional life for Christians. In theological perspective, mission is about God sending his only son for the purpose of reestablishing spiritual communion and harmony with humanity. The biblical references identify the historical Jesus as the one sent. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection became the catalyst that continues to propel Christians into effective ministry. Missional living, from a biblical concept, is found in the teachings of Christ and how he responded to the everyday issues of his time. His teachings and reactions to the poor and marginalized and his response to injustice shaped his ministry. Several biblical references bear evidence of this.

The gospel of Luke provides a description of what missional life would be like in the ministry of Jesus. In Luke 4, Jesus read from the Torah in the synagogue at Nazareth,

26. Hertzberg, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 286–7.

27. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 24 (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1985), 137.

reciting a passage from Isaiah that defined his mission. This passage illustrated a new era, a proclamation, that liberty would be certain, and bondage along with oppression would end. The narrative announced that someone would establish this, whereas past Israelites did not. As Jesus read this passage, it set the stage, not only for his mission but for that of those who become his followers. Bock expounds on Luke 4:18–19 this way:

Jesus will do what Israel was rebuked in Isaiah 58 for not doing: Jesus will meet the needs of those who need God. The picture again is of Jesus reaching out to the needy and giving them aid. It is a declaration of injustice reversed. In the next line (Jesus reads), which returns to Isaiah 61, the Jubilee year image of release was present. Jesus ultimate role is not only to proclaim deliverance: He brings that release. In this description of His mission, He is seen as both eschatological prophet and Messiah.²⁸

In Bock's exegesis of Isaiah 61, which Jesus recited in Luke 4:18–19, he used several words that give meaning to missional context. The words "aid" and "release" speak volumes regarding what the mission of Jesus would entail. Beginning with Israel, Jesus was sent to aid all who were spiritually impoverished by sin. Jesus came to announce a kingdom that would ensure a Jubilee that would bring release from bondage at all levels. The good news was that he initiated this annunciation of liberty. In the religious social settings of ancient Judaism, the year of Jubilee was welcomed because bondage and servitude were temporary.

Jesus began his earthly ministry proclaiming that "aid" and "release" were now present to all who wanted and longed for it. The proclamation went forth, that in God's kingdom, righteousness, justice, and peace would be a way of life. In order to experience and live the kingdom way, inward change was needed. Jesus spoke of this in Mark's gospel, saying, "The time has come," and the kingdom of God had come near; therefore,

28. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1994), 410.

“repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15, NIV). Mark cited Jesus stating his mission, and that, through him, God’s reign would be evident on earth. Robert Stein exegetes the Mark 1:15 passage, affirming the good news, that God through Jesus, would rule from within the human heart. Stein comments as follows:

A new spiritual rule of God being established in the human heart; the end of history soon occurring and the final judgement taking place; the promised rule of God now having arrived in its entirety; and the reign of God now beginning in that the OT promises are being fulfilled, the promised Spirit is once again being active and soon dwelling in every believer, but the final consummation still lying in the future.²⁹

For God to rule and reign within his human subjects there would need to be a willingness to be converted. Mark also makes this clear in Jesus’s proclamation. True conversion comes from radical change, which can become evident starting with repentance. Mark quotes Jesus in the latter portion of 1:15, saying, “Repent and believe the good news.” Adela Collins comments on repentance as a course that leads to a deep change in one’s actions and way of life, to turn from something old and embrace something new. She explains the repentance that Jesus was calling for in this way:

The use of the term “repent,” in verse 15 of Mark chapter 1, does not yet connote penitential discipline or primarily a human decision that begins a process of moral reform. Rather, it signifies a turning away from one’s previous life, determined by particular sets of convictions, practices, and social affiliations and a turning to and acceptance of the new divine initiative through the agency of Jesus.³⁰

The Christian Church and Missional Ministry

The death and resurrection of Jesus validates the Christian church’s call to mission. Followers of Jesus have been called upon to continue what Jesus first

29. Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 72.

30. Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 155.

proclaimed in Mark 1:15. The mission of the church is to demonstrate as well as declare the grace of God found in Jesus Christ. If the theological dynamics of mission are closely observed in respect to the triune Godhead, it is apparent that the church is “sent” to display its missional calling in community. There is biblical evidence in the gospels of Luke and John to equate “missional” with “sending.” Jesus professes his deep commitment of declaring a gospel to a community hungry for change. He uses the phrase, “for this is why I was sent” (Luke 4:43). Bock exegetes Luke 4:43 to associate the word “sent” with the word “mission”: “It is interesting that two of these terms appearing here also were found in the description of Jesus’s mission (Luke 4:18) to preach, ‘the good news’ and ‘I was sent.’ Jesus has a mission, which He must heed. It involves the message of the kingdom’s nearness.”³¹

According to the gospel of John, however, regarding the good news of God’s kingdom where salvation and liberty will thrive, the word “send” in reference to “mission” appears again. The word “send” is found in John 3:17 (NIV) with Jesus saying, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” The world’s salvation was achieved by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The question is, however, how the good news of God’s reign, as proclaimed by Jesus, continues, especially now that Christ has conquered death? The answer is found again in the theological paradigm of Christianity, in reference to “sending” within the triune Godhead.

Biblical evidence in the New Testament further shows that God’s mission was transferred from Jesus to his followers—the disciples. They became empowered by the

31. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 440.

Holy Spirit not only to proclaim but to demonstrate the beauty and continuity of kingdom life promised under Jesus. The gospel message became their responsibility, which is clearly apparent from the words of Christ recorded in John's gospel, "As the father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21, NIV). Again, this is associated with the words "sent" or "sending," involving mission. Craig Keener refers to these words spoken by Jesus to his disciples:

Whereas the sending of the Son is the heart of the fourth gospel's plot, its conclusion is open-ended, spilling into the story of the disciples. Thus, the church's mission is, for John's theology, to carry on Jesus's mission. Because Jesus was sending just as the Father sent him, the disciples would carry on Jesus's mission, including not only signs pointing to Jesus but also witness through which the Spirit would continue Jesus's presence and work.³²

In the last chapter of Matthew's gospel, as Jesus prepares to leave earth and return to heaven, he gives his followers instructions to continue what he started, which is known as the Great Commission. The Lord Jesus is quoted saying, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19–20, NIV). The Great Commission of Jesus is a missional plan of action. This plan of action propels the disciples into missional activity. The early church is charged to continue the work Jesus started. A more detailed meaning of the Great Commission is needed to explain the nucleus of missional mobility. In the Great Commission, major focus is given to the words and phrase such as, "go," "baptize," and "teaching them to observe."

32. Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John Commentary*, vol. 2 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 1204.

The Great Commission, therefore, reveals the descriptive work of mission for the Christian church. This means to “go” in the spirit of obedience and commitment to the work of Christ Jesus. It means proclaiming a gospel that convicts the soul, whereas through baptism, allegiance is pledge to Christ. The Great Commission commands that kingdom life must be taught, both in doctrine and by living examples. This is how first disciples would proclaim a kingdom ruled by Jesus. In this kingdom, individuals are kindred spirits, knit together in love, peace, justice, righteousness, and mercy. Stanley Hauerwas explains the commissioning of the disciples in this manner, “The disciples are now equipped to be sent to the nations, baptizing them into the death and resurrection of Jesus to make them citizens of his death-defying kingdom. Israel is not left behind, but rather its mission is now continued in a new reality called the church.”³³

In Hauerwas’s comments, the words “citizens” and “kingdom” are of special interest. Where is this kingdom in which the followers of Jesus will live? This question alludes to the interrelated definition of “kingdom of God” and “missional.” The answer lies in Jesus’s response to the religious leaders who questioned him as to when the kingdom of God would come. Luke quotes Jesus’s response, “Neither shall they say, ‘Lo here! Or lo there!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20–1). This scripture is in conjunction with Jeremiah’s prophecy, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33, NRSV). Those who vow allegiance to Jesus become part of the missional community, further defined as the kingdom of God. Bock gives a clear explanation of this reality, “Rather, the kingdom is made up of those people who have responded to Jesus

33. Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 249.

and share in the benefits he has to offer. Kingdom citizens are those who turn and come to him. They form a new community and are to reflect God's love and care by the way they live loving God and fellow humans.³⁴

Biblical Description of Missional Life

Further evidence of a missional community is biblically documented in early church life. Followers of Jesus lived in a harmonious atmosphere because everyone was conscious of the equality of others. This is not to say that the church did not have social concerns to be addressed. The overall truth was that being spirit residents in Jesus's kingdom, they were moved to respond to social issues in righteousness and justice. They were able to live this way because the Holy Spirit empowered them to live as Jesus taught. The Book of Acts gives a vivid description of how well early Christians lived together as a loving community with a genuine concern for each other. The effectiveness of the early Christians witness was necessitated on how well they modeled their faith in community life.

Bock makes note of Acts 2:42–7, describing the faith community. The early Christians were committed to the teaching of God's word. This means they continued on the discipleship path, learning to be like Jesus. They were like-minded and fellowshiped together. This does not mean that they all thought alike; rather, they were aware of the worth of one another. This aided them in coming together as one body, freeing them from stereotyping. Their witness as a spiritual community was effective because non-believers were drawn to them. In Bock's words:

34. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1419.

In sum, Luke affirms the internal fellowship, intimacy, and engagement of the community. This positive activity is accomplished by joy and glad hearts, and their worship and praise of God are ongoing. But this is not an isolated, private club or a hermetically sealed community. Their reputation with outsiders also is good. This good reputation apparently impacts their witness: Luke concludes the summary with a note that as each day passes, the Lord adds to the number who are being saved.³⁵

The early church had a missional identity, in that they were theologically minded in their study and living. They were followers of Jesus because he was in their hearts. In their day-to-day engagements, they sought to replicate the life and teachings of Christ. The fact that Bock summarizes their effectiveness as a witness community with outsiders highlights them in their peculiarity. Their lifestyle as followers of Jesus gave them a certain distinction. In retrospect, this faith community recorded in Acts resembles the model lifestyle that God wanted to mold into the ancient Israelites. This is what God told Israel, “Now if you obey fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priest and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites” (Exod. 19:5–6, NIV).

In the Apostle Peter’s letter to Gentile Christians, who geographically lived outside of Judea, he encouraged them to live out their faith. Interestingly, what he wrote to the Christians of the Diaspora was nearly identical with what is found in Exod. 19:5–6. The portion of Peter’s letter that is relevant in comparison to Exodus 19 reads, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His wonderful light” (1 Pet. 2:9, NIV). Just as the ancient priests were there to help guide Israel in the

35. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 154.

practices of the Mosaic law, so Christians were here admonished to live their faith before others. Of course, they let their light shine among themselves, but their calling in their newfound faith in Christ was to model Jesus to others. Being called into the marvelous light meant they were God's trophies of what the redeemed in Jesus looked like. Karen Jorbes exegetes 1 Pet. 2:9 this way:

In biblical theology, Israel's deliverance from exile in Babylon is the typological forerunner of the greater deliverance achieved by Jesus Christ, deliverance of God's people out of darkness into light. Peter makes a radical claim that those who believe in Jesus Christ—whether Jew, Gentile, Greek, Roman, Cappadocian, Bithynian, or whatever—though from many races, constitute a new race of those who have been born again into the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.³⁶

From this presentation of biblical foundations in support of missional theology, the report now turns to the lived-out life of missional practitioners in 21st-century culture.

Practical Foundations: Living Missionally in African-American Communities

In American history, there once existed a beautiful, spiritual, and social bonding between the African-American community and their churches. Black residents once looked to the African-American church for support, however it was needed. In African-American communities presently, this is no longer the case; instead, there is a spiritual and mental disconnect between the two. In local, rural, Black communities, the church has shown little interest in addressing community concerns. Another concern is that there is a subtle but growing unrest within African-American congregations involving meaningful ministry. Local Black congregations see the local pathology within the neighborhoods and feel powerless. Black communities know that there are churches

36. Karen H. Jorbes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 159.

around them but view them as irrelevant. This is a problem that must be addressed.

Wilmore and Cone recorded the Black United Methodist Church denomination as saying,

The local church must look upon the task in the Black community to be so crucial that the church initiates plans to establish team ministries in every congregation in the community. Such teams, composed of clergy and laity, should be organized on the task force basis, providing special functions as legal services, employment counseling, cooperative buying, extra-educational programs, and community organizations.³⁷

Hicks offers a challenge to the African-American church to return to its ecclesial nature of being the sent agent under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is quite adamant that it is essential for Black churches to engage the community they serve. In further summary of his perspective, the Black church must look inward and change. Hicks articulates that present congregations view church membership as being elevated to an elite status, which gives birth to religious exclusivity. This frame of thinking has the tendency to ignore the poor, the hungry, and those who suffer from the ills of social injustice. Because of this ideology, the Black community, growing in number, view their churches as impotent institutions. Others consider the church a religious social club for the self-righteous. To erase this perception of the Black church, Hicks insists, change is necessary and must be radical. It will involve revolutionary change if it is to function as designed by God.³⁸ Now is the time, when African-American communities are in spiritual and social-economic crisis, that the African-American church must defend itself from the charges of irrelevance.

37. Gayraud S. Wilmore and James H. Cone, *Black Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), 227.

38. Beecher H. Hicks, "Challenge of African American Churches: Problems and Perspectives for the Third Millennium," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 51, no.1 (Sum-Fall 1994): 81–97.

There is much cause for concern for the church and the community. The community is overwhelmed with so many social problems, such as drugs, crime, poverty, and teen pregnancy. Rural African-American churches, however, seeing these problems, lack the desire to approach the issues in their own community. Most rural, African-American churches are locked in a traditional time warp or ideology regarding the true nature of its ecclesiology. They are mentally and spiritually tunnel-visioned and their worship and ministry are exclusive. This is not how Black churches responded to community needs in the past, especially during the civil rights era. Hicks quotes Kirbyjon Caldwell of the Windsor Village United Methodist Church as being germane for the necessity of a new spiritual evaluation. “Churches really have two choices—they can either be monuments representing what used to be, or mission stations designed to meet the current and anticipated needs of the community.”³⁹

For the church, key components in effective ministry will entail reevaluating their theological, biblical, and ecclesiological understandings of who they are and what their purpose must be. The missional concept is the best way to reengage in ministry because a missional mindset fosters radical change. Rural, African-American congregations with a missional mindset will become Spirit-led in addressing local spiritual and social concerns in their neighborhoods. This can happen when churches reintroduce themselves and explore new strategies to aid the communities. To reestablish the confidence of their neighborhoods, they must bypass the traditional denominational forms of ministry to one that embraces the residents living outside of the congregation walls. The authors of the Black Theology Project wrote this relevant statement:

39. Hicks, “Challenge of African American Churches,” 86.

The church must come out from behind its stained-glass walls and dwell where mothers are crying, children are hungry, and fathers are jobless. The issue is survival in a society that has defined blackness as corruption and degradation. Jesus did not die in a sanctuary, nor did Martin Luther King Jr. In those places where pain was the deepest and suffering the most severe, there Jesus lived, suffered, died, and was resurrected.⁴⁰

Bringing African-American churches and their neighborhoods closer will necessitate becoming familiar with the people. They must become visible, prepared to extend a hands-on approach. The Black Christian church must conclude, within the revelatory scope of its calling, that they are called to become an evangelizing community. Olin Moyd points out that, within the scope of evangelism, to be instrumental congregations, they must realize that they are to be a visible embodiment in their geographical area of worship and ministry.⁴¹

As Black churches reembrace their ecclesiological calling, the hope is that they will become emergent in nature. This means that, under the inspiration of the Spirit, they will be enabled in their ability to become creative in ministry. Within African-American life, the culture is evolving in theology, language terminology, and life in general. Over time, the systemic problems of crime, racism, and poverty have reshaped their philosophy about themselves and the society in which they live. Therefore, communication will be crucial for congregations as they become involved again in community life.

In an article that is relevant to this study, Ralph Watkins discusses the existence of a communications gap between Black churches and their communities. The gap in question is theological in nature. This communication barrier exists due to the church's

40. Black Theology Project, "Message to the Black Church and Community," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 34, no. 2 (Fall-Win 1977): 23-8.

41. Olin Moyd, "Redemption in the Roots of Black Theology: A Model for Evangelizing Community," *Foundations* 20, no. 4 (1977): 306.

estranged relationship with neighborhood residents. For missional ministry, the church must be able to dialogue and demonstrate the message of Jesus. Watkins enters into a discussion with Hip Hop artist Talib Kweli concerning bringing the gospel message to the inner city. Kweli commented that at present, it is a fruitless endeavor due to Black churches being out of touch with the life experiences in what he calls ghetto neighborhoods. He added that institutionalized religion cannot speak to the sufferings and the systemic problems that Black communities endure. Thus, the message of the Black churches is irrelevant to young inner-city African Americans.⁴²

Watkins continues in this article by making a profound statement quoting theologian James Cone. The statement that Cone made merges with that of Kweli, making a valid case that Black churches must learn to communicate effectively in order to minister in their neighborhoods. “Unless Black theology can become a ghetto theology, a theology which speaks to Black people, the gospel message has no promise of life for the Black man or woman, it is a lifeless message.”⁴³

Collectively, Watkins, Cone, and Kweli make a valid point, that the gospel must have relevancy in the community. The gospel narrative of Mark speaks to the very nature of this. Jesus preaches, “The kingdom of God is like a man who cast seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself, first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head more” (Mark 4:26–9, NIV). To make the good news of the kingdom of God relevant to farmers, Jesus used an illustration about sowing seeds in

42. Ralph C. Watkins, “From Black Theology and Afrocentric Theology and Hip-Hop Power,” *Black Theology* 8, no. 3 (2010): 329.

43. Ibid.

the earth. Although Christian seminary is useful for the purpose of developing a sound theological foundation in doctrine, it must become applicable to be useful. This happens best when Black churches look beyond Sunday and mid-week fellowship, seeking meaningful ways to get involved with the residents located around them.

Anne Wimberly wrote a study involving ways to reclaim Black youth in urban communities. She investigated the methods of various ministry groups attempting to address the spiritual and socio-economic concerns of urban Black youth. While her work should not be considered a norm for missional practice, it highlights a necessary ingredient for emergent churches. Her research underscores the importance of exploration and creativity. Being Spirit-led opens the door to embrace new possibilities and ideas. The mandates that youth ministries put in practice to be helpful and uplifting for community youth could be applicable in Black communities in general. The program Wimberly investigated was designed to ensure hope in Black youth amidst the dire circumstances that befall them in their social environment. The priorities of this program are explained in three goals of the ministry groups: 1) The context—know the community context in which Black youth exist, 2) The critical content—identify and develop critical content that is relevant to the context and the needs of Black teens, and 3) The connection—reach out and connect with youth by being real with them so that they will want to reach back.⁴⁴

The overall point from Wimberly's study is that the church must get involved. It will take the African-American church communities all working together. Within a congregation's missional mindset, Black churches can become better assets to the

44. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, "A Mandate for Action: The Church's Ministry with Urban Black Youth," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 40, no.1 (Fall 2014): 25.

kingdom. A missional mindset is birthed when Black churches become convicted and moved by the problems resident African Americans face. They come face-to-face with the reality of where they are in ministry. They seek divine guidance and embrace scripture to rediscover their true identity and purpose. African-American churches must allow God to lead because, in his omniscience, only he can interpret the groaning pains to the community and prepare the church to serve at its best.

With these discoveries in mind, the report will now turn to the specific application of the research as integrated at Mt. Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas.

Chapter III

Action

The project of moving the MOMBC congregation toward a missional mindset began in February 2021. This involved a series of group discussions that were to initiate open communication to unveil deep concerns about Mt. Olive's ministry and future. The discussions were designed to lead the congregation toward a missional transformation. The group discussions involved using the missional change model found in Roxburgh and Romanuk's book, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. This change model, a five-step process outlined in the book, appeared to be a design which would help the Mt. Olive congregation move toward a missional lifestyle transformation. The five-step process included the following segments: awareness, understanding, evaluation, experimentation, and commitment.

The Mt. Olive congregation, along with its pastoral leader, who was also the project director, decided that these group discussions would best be held in family groups within participant homes. Within these groups, family members took turns as facilitators. The reason the group discussions were held this way is due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic throughout Texas and the U.S. Mt. Olive members thought group discussions were the best way to take safety precautions against the pandemic. Facilitating this project was a real challenge to the entire church due to COVID-19. Ever since COVID-19 came to Texas, the church has held its worship services on Zoom for one hour and

forty-five minutes. Due to church members' work schedules and daily family concerns, the pastor decided that Sunday was the best time to conduct a three-week introductory session regarding the group discussions. The purpose of these sessions was to explain and familiarize the congregational participants with the five-step missional process outlined in the curriculum guide, *The Missional Leader*.

During the first week's session, the pastor explained that the journey to missional change would entail five stages. Mt. Olive learned that the first two phases—awareness and understanding—would take the form of group discussions. The church was then informed that the third step, evaluation, would also be a group discussion centered on evaluating what was learned in the previous discussions. During the next two sessions, the pastor discussed further the first stage—awareness. This appeared to be repetitious, but the pastor deemed it necessary. This was done to ensure that all group members understood how the discussions would play out. The members learned that the discussions were about open communication through dialogue and that listening was key to discovering truth about the congregation. The spiritual discipline of unifying in daily prayer and before group discussions was encouraged. The pastor requested that aside from daily devotions, the congregation would pray each day at noon for clarity during the group discussions. The purpose of this exercise was to foster unity among participants, openness in dialogue, and understanding of what was communicated.

The pastor used a ten-question questionnaire as a guide to help participants discuss their feelings about ministry. The questionnaire was created to help the family group discussions in the at-home setting. All participants agreed to have group discussions within their homes as families. The questionnaire was designed to navigate

the ideas as presented and crafted, not to foster solutions, but to stimulate individuals to discuss their true and intimate feelings about the congregation in general. The pastor, along with leadership, instructed facilitators that the questionnaire was not for open dialogue only but so each participant could document their answers.

Before the group discussions began in family homes, the questions were emailed to Mt. Olive's online worship facilitator, who then emailed a copy to each participant. Each family group was given time to respond by email or phone as to whether they received a copy of the awareness questions. The pastor and worship facilitator encountered a concern during the submitting of the questions. Both leaders kept in mind the various work schedules of members. The concern was to isolate the best time to conduct the group discussions. Because of this factor, the pastor voiced his concern with the congregational participants at the closing of the Sunday worship service. It was afterwards decided that everyone thought the best time for the group discussions would be each Sunday following the morning worship service since families generally were in a more casual, relaxed atmosphere and that there was less conflict with weekly family routine.

Mt. Olive's Sunday Worship timeframe was also taken into consideration. Sunday online service time was revised. The time length of worship was changed from one hour and forty-five minutes to one hour. The pastor recommended this, and everyone involved in the group discussions agreed. A change in the length of general worship service allowed group members a break before they began the discussions.

During the awareness sessions, all group members concentrated on the questions given. Each person was allowed to answer the questions through verbal expression while

others listened. Then they wrote their responses in long or short answers on paper. When Mt. Olive concluded the first stage of the missional change model, the worship facilitator collected everyone's written responses. The responses were either collected by hand or by email. This strategy was necessary for the pastoral leader to learn what was expressed in the discussions. Documentation was needed for analyzing the findings of this study.

The awareness questions ranged from feelings about the ministry, the Baptist Church Covenant (BCC), worship, and about modeling the Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus. The participants were asked what strengths and deficiencies they recognized in the church. Each participant was encouraged to take his or her time during the discussions. The pastor informed group facilitators to assure that everyone could be openly honest in answering the questionnaire. The individual group discussions began the third week of February. Pastoral leadership reminded participants that discussions were not to be rushed. The leadership and pastor agreed together that this was the best way to alleviate any possible anxiety or fear of being brutally honest.

The awareness group discussions were conducted in the individual family groups. Each group scheduled its discussion at the appointed time on Sunday. During the awareness discussions, questions were asked about how well the church was performing in ministry. The groups entertained questions about the Baptist Covenant as a mental model. Questions were asked about the congregation's strengths and weaknesses. Two key components were conducted during the group discussions: open dialogue and listening. Mt. Olive and the pastor decided, during the group awareness discussions, that only Sundays would be retained for online worship. This decision changed, however, due to evaluation given to various day-to-day family responsibilities. During the first week of

June, the awareness group discussions were completed. All documented questionnaires were collected by group leaders and given to the pastor/project manager. Only two groups, due to travel distance, sent their group results by email to the pastor.

Questionnaires were compiled from sixteen participants—there were ten non-participants. The non-participants were members who chose not to participate or who were exempt due to mental health and/or age. The pastor/project manager began his analysis of the documented data collected from the awareness group discussions during the third week of June. Written responses were collected from the worship facilitator. Every response to each question was evaluated by the project manager. Out of sixteen written responses to ten questions, each question was evaluated to form a composite score for each question from each individual questionnaire.

On the first Sunday in July, the pastor introduced the Mt. Olive participants to the second phase of the missional change model—understanding. The pastor had thoroughly taken the participants through an introduction of this next stage. To accomplish this goal, the following steps were engaged. First, it took two weeks to evaluate the awareness questionnaires. After evaluating the awareness questionnaires, the pastor shared the results with the congregation. The next step, following next Sunday's worship service, was teaching them that the understanding stage would be a continuation of what they had learned in the awareness stage.

To give Mt. Olive more clarity, the results from the awareness questionnaires were presented. A composite of each question of the ten questions was discussed with the congregation. During this introductory period, Mt. Olive was informed that the results learned in awareness group discussions would be helpful in bringing further clarity and

understanding. The church members, due to the pandemic, continued the discussions in small groups in their homes.

The pastor, with the help of the church online worship facilitator, instructed participants to continue the group discussions in the same group format as in the awareness step. Everyone participating received an eight-page questionnaire for Step 2 (understanding). Until Steps 1 and 2 were completed (awareness, understanding), the worship organizer reported to the pastor where groups were in their discussions, in reference to time. The pastor continued to communicate through the worship organizer the importance of not rushing the discussions. The family groups were readily prepared to finish the discussions and move to the next step of the missional change model.

The second round of group discussions was completed and collected by the church's online worship organizer and given to the pastor. As before, the pastor traveled to Crockett to retrieve the results of Step 2—understanding. Those participants living outside Crockett, and those not able to travel, sent their questionnaires by email to the pastor for evaluation. The online worship facilitator reported that no one felt pressured to rush the discussions. All Step 2 questionnaires and analyses were completed by the second week of September. A close associate outside of the Mt. Olive's membership was called upon to assist with analyzing the collected results retrieved by the pastor. This associate has a background in computer information systems. Within a week, the specialist completed the analysis and reviewed the results with the project manager.

On the third Sunday of August 2021, the pastor began teaching a course on the foundation of Christian mission. A lesson plan was created. The title of this lesson plan was "God and Mission: Lesson Plan for Mt. Olive Baptist Church Congregation, a Class

on Mission” (Appendix B). These courses were believed to be instrumental for Mt. Olive participants, ensuring a theological, biblical perspective of mission. The second course was scheduled for the first Sunday in September. Both courses were blended into Mt. Olive’s weekly Sunday online worship schedule. Both sessions of the course were scheduled to last one hour each.

Prior to the course, the congregation was informed about the essential need of getting a sound theological and biblical foundation. The teaching materials used for this course were the NIV Bible and missional life information. This information contained solid theological perspectives that were germane to the course. Additionally, two books were used—*The Missional Church in Perspective* and *Introducing the Missional Church*—to provide additional resources. The Bible was used to show, theologically and biblically, God’s involvement in missional activity with people. The books on missional life were used to demonstrate the theological origin of mission and the true place of the church involving mission. Before the courses began, the congregation was strongly encouraged to bring a Bible, paper, and pen for the purpose of taking notes.

To evaluate what was learned from these classes, the pastor asked the congregation, during the next online worship meeting, what they had learned. On Sunday, September 19, after morning worship and before the third step of the missional change model—evaluation—a report was given. After listening to each individual comment on the mission classes, key learning was achieved regarding the theological, biblical origin of mission. What the groups learned in the mission classes is revealed in Chapter IV of this report. Before the pastor and groups began the evaluation exercise, all agreed that prayer for God’s presence, for unity, clarity, and understanding were essential. At the

beginning of this group meeting, the pastor wanted to help bring clarity, which would need to occur in this evaluation. To familiarize the group with the evaluation process, the pastor read a section from the book, *The Missional Leader*:

As awareness and understanding engage the congregation, its desire for action increases. This is not the time for action and planning, but evaluation. At this stage, it is vital for members to take the time to evaluate their current activities, attitudes, and values as a congregation relative to its changing context. People need to ask about the support they need in terms of skills, structures, and resources to move forward. The congregation is now also in decision-making phase, discerning whether to choose to move forward with deliberate actions for missional innovation or to halt the process.¹

During these group discussions, current activities and attitudes were discussed, as were programs and various worship practices. The conversation centered around worship, outreach ministry, and the youth. Each of these areas was evaluated. As the meeting continued, it became clear that every member was seeing the need for change. The first round of group discussions lasted one hour and twenty minutes. Before the discussions ended, the group agreed together to increase the spiritual discipline involving prayer. For the purpose for spiritual clarity, the group agreed to focus prayer on three specific needs. Each day during the week until they met again for a group discussion, the group prayed for transparency, unity, and the ability to respect each other's personhood. Everyone agreed to close the discussions for the day and continue them the following Sunday after morning worship.

After worship on Sunday, September 26, 2021, the evaluation discussions continued on schedule. The group came together for prayer, seeking God's presence, and asking him to meet the specific needs that were lifted in prayer. Group participants continued to evaluate various areas of worship, the youth program, the BCC, and the

1. Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 96.

outreach program. The group discussions were slow because certain members needed time to articulate feelings. This meeting lasted a total of two hours.

Near the close of the meeting, all agreed that various areas being evaluated needed modification. These areas agreed upon were the outreach program, advanced Bible study classes, and a restructuring of Sunday worship tailored to the youth. During this stage of the change model—evaluation—participants recognized a need for creativity and change. Before the group discussions closed, Mt. Olive was prepared to experiment in one specific area—the outreach program. The group concluded that, due to COVID-19, the event would be outdoors, and health risks would be closely evaluated and controlled. Additional areas that the church group decided together to explore while initiating incremental change would be done when health concerns improved with the pandemic.

In the fourth stage of the missional change model—experiment—the congregation decided to form into a mission team. The purpose of this team would be to further explore the neighborhood, searching for ways to assist it. The time schedule for this event was from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. The church group agreed on this timeframe because it was on a Saturday and residents were usually outside. They also agreed not to knock on doors so they would not disturb anyone's privacy. Each of the members felt that people would be more approachable if they were up and outdoors. This team was divided into two essential groups--a prayer group and an exploratory group. Some members, due to age and health, were not physically able to walk the designated locale of concern. Others were skittish about approaching residents. These members were then assembled as the prayer group.

The prayer team prayed for the community and for the exploratory team as they entered into the community. The exploratory team functioned by canvassing the neighborhood, reintroducing themselves to the residents. The task of the exploratory group was to ask questions about the conditions and overall social climate of the Pine Ridge area. The purpose of these questions was to listen and learn and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, find ways to be of service.

On Saturday, October 2, at 11:00 am, the exploratory team of three individuals arrived in the Pine Ridge area. The group came together and prayed before entering the neighborhood projects and then began introducing themselves to the residents. During the evaluation and experimentation stages, such as this outing, it was decided that the exploratory team would do three things: 1) Introduce themselves as representatives of the Mt. Olive Church; 2) Inquire about the social wellbeing of the people living there; and 3) Ask residents what kind of assistance the church could provide. The team met with various residents who voiced their most intimate concerns. As team members listened to residents, they could hear the low morale in their voices. The team also learned that there was an overwhelming concern for the youth in Pine Ridge and that some of the elderly needed assistance. The outing lasted for three hours because the team felt the need to prolong the outing and continue listening to residents voice their concerns. After the outing, the exploratory team all agreed to report their findings to the church group in the meeting after Sunday worship.

After Sunday morning online worship on October 4, the congregation listened to the report given by the exploratory team about the social concerns of the Pine Ridge residents. The group reported the following: low optimism of the elderly due to the

surrounding violence, an infestation of drug use, and the observation of possible gun violence. The overall major concern was the absence of needed social programming for youth involvement. After the report, there was much silence. The pastor sensed this was overwhelming for a small congregation. After discussion, however, all agreed that in the area of outreach something needed to be done.

The group then discussed the fifth and final stage of this exercise—commitment. The overall idea in this stage of the missional change model was for participants to commit to working with others through the process of the awareness and understanding stages. During the meeting, this group acknowledged a need for change. In the awareness and understanding stages, the answers received voicing Mt. Olive's future noted this problem and, because of the growing concerns, agreed and were aware of committing to work with other members in a continuous process. During the meeting, everyone was willing to work with others and agreed to attempt experimental and incremental change in the areas discussed during the evaluation and experiment phases of the missional change model. Next, the report turns to an evaluation of the action of the project.

Chapter IV

Evaluation

The process using the missional change model for transforming MOMBC to a missional mindset lasted for eight months. This missionally focused project started in February 2021 and lasted until the first Sunday in October 2021. Sixteen members participated in the project. Within this eight-month time span, about four and a half months were given to the first two stages of Roxburgh and Romanuk's *The Missional Leader* missional change model—awareness and understanding—so that the discussion groups were given more time to process their thoughts and feelings.

A key learning for the pastoral leader came from how the group discussions took place. The initial setting for the group discussions was Mt. Olive's sanctuary, but this did not happen for fear of health concerns due to COVID-19. All who were willing to participate in the discussions unanimously agreed to do them within family groups. A key learning was that the participants felt freer to discuss and express themselves among family members. This learning suggests that, in the sanctuary, most of them would have been reluctant to engage in any meaningful conversation for fear of how others would respond. The project manager saw this method as progressive because feeling free to express personal feelings was essential to this study.

After the realization that the awareness and understanding group discussions would be conducted within family groups, two tools were created by the pastor for the

purpose of analyzing and evaluating how individuals felt about the present status of the ministry at Mt. Olive. The tools were in the form of questionnaires. During the group discussions, each family member took turns as facilitator and asked others in the group the same question. All questionnaires, when finished, were collected for analysis, which was offered for each question. All awareness and understanding questionnaire results are listed in Appendices C-E. Following is the description of the results.

Analysis from Awareness Group Discussions

In Question 1 of awareness, participants were asked to make a comparison of Mt. Olive to the early church that modeled the gospel mandate given in Matt. 28:16–20, the Great Commission. Out of the sixteen participants, eight disagreed and five agreed that the church was fulfilling the mandate. Only three believed that the church modeled the gospel mandate to some extent. A column graph shows these findings (Appendix D). This question was asked because Matt. 28:16–20 notes the responsibility given to the Christian church. This question was also given to learn congregants' responses and how they measured themselves against the gospel mandate. The analysis showed that Mt. Olive was slightly divided on this issue, given that only three participants somewhat agreed, along with the five who did think that the church modeled the gospel mandate.

The next question was created because the project manager believed that if Mt. Olive were going to be effective in serving the neighborhood, knowledge of a community consensus was essential. Question 2 of awareness centered on Mt. Olive knowing how the community felt about them. The project manager felt that the response to this question would help participants to gauge themselves as to following the prototype ministry of the first-century Christian church. In the column graph in Appendix D, below

Question 2 (awareness) and the title, “Presence of Mt. Olive in the Community (Pine Ridge),” the following analysis is provided. Of the sixteen participants, overwhelmingly, most believed that the neighborhood had a favorable opinion of the Mt. Olive congregation. Only a small percentage disagreed. The large favorable response was due to Mt. Olive’s previous outreach program. The small percentage disagreeing was because of the feeling that much more should be done working directly with community youth.

Question 2 and the response shows that, aside from Mt. Olive’s traditional form of worship, the church was sensing its true purpose as extending beyond themselves. This showed participants that they were needed in God’s plan, serving the community.

Question 3 was more internal or congregational, designed for members to respond about leadership encouraging participation in various areas of ministry. On the column graph entitled, “Impact of Mt. Olive Leadership,” Figure 3 (Appendix D), the leadership scored high on this graph. The graph shows that thirteen of sixteen revealed that leadership does make efforts to get other members involved in ministry. Only two confirmed that there was little encouragement and one noted that there was none at all. Based on the results of this question, the analysis was that the pastoral leader can only attempt to spur on congregational leaders to inspire members through demonstration and encouragement.

In the awareness group discussions, the project manager wanted to stimulate conversation about Mt. Olive’s strengths and weaknesses as a congregation. The column graph under the title, “Strength of Congregation,” Figure 4 in Appendix D, shows where members believe their strengths are. The graph shows that the responses among the sixteen participants were inconclusive. The outreach ministry, church attendance, and Sunday worship scored high with the outreach ministry surpassing everything else on the

graph. Only three members chose the teaching ministry, while hospitality (welcoming and greeting) received two votes and church projects one. Question 5 furthered the discussions where members felt the congregation needed improvement. The results from the discussion on improvement were just as inconclusive as those in Question 4—discussing strengths. The highest response among the sixteen participants, however, was negativity toward the congregation’s traditional format of worship (six participants). The results from other members ranged from better leadership strategies (three), increased activity in the outreach program (three), encouraging others in church attendance (two), advanced teaching class (two), and financial responsibility (one). Question 6 centered on being involved with the youth of the congregation. In the graph, under the title, “Effective Ministry to Youth and within Our Neighborhood,” Table 6, in Appendix D, shows the following. Of sixteen participants, twelve suggested overwhelmingly that the youth of Mt. Olive were not being effectively ministered to. Only four of sixteen believed the ministry was successfully doing well by the youth. The graph showing twelve, indicating that more should be done with youth, unveiled a crucial truth. Results from Question 6 suggest that more must be done by being creative in promoting youth participation in service.

The conversation involving the BCC evolved from the seventh awareness question. Of the sixteen members, thirteen believed the BCC was efficient in challenging the church to serve others and the neighborhood. Two agreed that the covenant partially challenged members, while only one said it did not. Question 7 proved the hypothesis the project manager had stated about Mt. Olive’s mental model in Chapter 1 of the study. The awareness conversation helped reveal that most members’ mental code of biblical

and spiritual ethics was from the BCC. Based on Question 7, the results that most participants favored the covenant, was not viewed as a total negative. From the pastor's perspective, however, the covenant concentrates on the Holy Spirit's spiritual function, centered mostly on the local congregation. It limits the Spirit's direction of ministry to flow into the community.

Question 8 concerned worship and fellowship. In their discussions, members explored how they felt about the worship ministry and fellowship, and only four out of sixteen suggested both were good. Seven respondents believed worship to be about average and five stated that both were poor. These responses showed that there were internal concerns that needed to be addressed further in the understanding and evaluation stages of the change model. The results from this column graph are found under the title, "The Look of Fellowship and Worship at Mt. Olive," Table 8 (Appendix D).

Question 9 in the awareness discussions asked about the individuals' deep overall concern for the congregation. The conversations in Question 9 revealed that twelve out of sixteen were concerned about the transition of Mt. Olive, meaning the congregation's future existence. Only two felt disturbed by COVID-19, which hindered the church from the normal format of worship (e.g., service in the building). The column graph in Appendix D under the title, "Concerns for Mt. Olive's Future," Figure 9, gives an analysis breakdown from given answers to Question 9.

The group members were asked to communicate with each other about their satisfaction with worship and ministry in Question 10. In this last question of the awareness group discussions, ten of sixteen related a dissatisfaction with the church's present worship and ministry, while six individuals were content with Mt. Olive's

worship and ministry functions. The results of Question 10 are found in Appendix D, under the title, “Status of Satisfaction on Worship and Ministry,” Figure 10.

Overall Evaluation of the Awareness Group Discussions

The overall evaluation of awareness group discussions conducted by Mt. Olive members revealed several areas of concern: worship, ministry, and the mental model. After completing the first step of the missional change model (awareness), the participants voiced strong concern and fear about their feelings regarding how worship and ministry were practiced. For instance, Question 1 of the awareness group discussions revealed a significant number who felt the congregation was not effectively modeling the gospel mandate (Matt. 28:16–20). As the discussions continued, there was insight from the results as to why most participants were feeling this way, which was due to Mt. Olive’s ties to traditional Baptist forms of worship. The results in Questions 5, 8, and 10 confirm this. A majority of members in Question 5, when asked where improvement was needed, voiced their opinion in changing some traditional practices. In Question 8 as the discussions continue, the results magnify the high concerns in Question 5. The answers in Question 8 show seven participants, who were concerned that worship was about average, while five rated it as poor. In Question 10, more than half the participants (ten) were not satisfied with worship. Therefore, Questions 1, 5, 8, and 10 responses alluded to the conclusion that Mt. Olive’s traditional form must be seriously addressed. The traditional context in which worship and ministry were practiced posed an internal dissatisfaction within Mt. Olive.

The pastoral leader believed that the Great Commission at heart, is about ministry to others. The point to be made is that modeling this gospel mandate necessitates

effective congregational worship. Without effective spiritual worship, Mt. Olive is not spiritually prepared for wherever the Holy Spirit would use them. Question 3 responses indicate that leadership at most, attempts to encourage others to be involved in various areas of worship and ministry.

In Question 7, group members expressed that the BCC challenged them for the work of ministry; thirteen of sixteen confirmed this when brought up in discussion. This number validated the covenant for most and thus served as a mental model. The problem was that results from Questions 1, 5, 8, and 10 showed an internal concern regarding the way worship and ministry were performed.

Another concern was on the subject of the youth in Mt. Olive. In Question 6, twelve of sixteen voiced a problem about the congregation effectively ministering to the youth. The twelve respondents believed this was due to Mt. Olive youth's disinterest in how worship was done. Only four believed the congregation was effective in responding to youth involvement. At the same time, the four who thought that members worked well with youth, did so because of reaching youth through the outreach program.

A positive result came from the answers found in response to Question 2. Of the sixteen group members, fifteen of sixteen have reported that the Pine Ridge residents have enjoyed the ministry, such as food, brought by Mt. Olive's ministry team. The pastor has observed the inhouse response to the commitment of service by this ministry team. (Appendix A). The outreach ministry is at best an expansion of service outside the Mt. Olive congregation. After searching the BCC (Mt. Olive's Mental Model), the covenant did not encourage heeding a sense of divine inspiration to serve outside of the local sanctuary. At best, the covenant's main focus centers on spiritual harmony within

the local membership. The evidence of this key observation required the pastor, along with other leadership, to encourage additional focus, seeking divine inspiration and hearing the Holy Spirit, thus learning how to serve best.

Analysis from Understanding Group Discussions

In the beginning of the project, sixteen participated in the group discussions. Three of the sixteen were no longer able to continue, however. This occurred not long before Step 2 (understanding) began. They left the program due to involvement in academic programs (two) and a change in work schedule (one).

Discussions continued from Question 1 concerning Mt. Olive modeling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20). In Step 1 (awareness) the results revealed that most members were failing in this area. Question 1 in Step 2 (understanding) was crafted to further the discussion about why members felt that way. In the column graph in Appendix E, under the title, “Mt. Olive Modeling the Great Commission,” Figure 1, the results follow. Five of thirteen gave the reason that the church was too traditional. Three suggested that the congregation was not fully submitted to the will of God. The remaining five believed that Mt. Olive was a strong example of the gospel mandate given by Jesus to the Christian Church.

The questionnaire’s second question was engineered to take the conversation deeper in relation to why they believed the Pine Ridge community thought well of the Mt. Olive congregation. All respondents except one gave favorable reasons as to why Pine Ridge residents felt good about the congregation. The favorable reasons ranged from the outreach program, establishing good relations, and the congregation generating a positive attitude about actively meeting the needs of people. Only one felt not enough

was being done, meaning not being consistent in working with community residents. The results of Question 2 are in Appendix E under the title, “Reasons for Favorable View of Mt. Olive Congregation in Crockett Community,” Table 2, Figure 2.

Question 3, which was centered on being active in the Mt. Olive ministry, was more personalized for the purpose of inward soul searching. Eleven of thirteen felt they were active in the areas of attendance, worship, and the outreach program. The reason for high marks on this question was because a few credited it to the online worship service at the time of writing. A few mentioned to the leadership that, because of health concerns and conflicting employment schedules, the online service made attending worship more accessible. The two who shared that they were not fully active would not expound on reasons why they were not. Question 4 was like Question 3 of the discussions, the purpose of which was to further the conversation on this particular question. The question was designed so that participants could be free to discuss anything that hindered them from giving their best.

The responses in Question 4 were identical to the ones in Question 3. In furthering the conversation, eleven of the thirteen group members said they felt that nothing stood in their way. In the case of the two who shared their problems of being fully committed, one stated it was due to needed encouragement. The other member stressed that it was hard to stay focused on online worship. The column graph in Appendix E, Figure 4, under the title, “Individual Commitment in Worship (Serving) and Bible Study,” reflected the evaluation of the results to this question.

Question 5 continued the query around youth involvement. The graph in Appendix E under the title, “Members Involvement in Youth Spiritual Nurturing,” Figure

5, revealed the following. There, seven of the thirteen shared that they were not involved in working with the youth. Only six confessed that they worked or attempted to work with the youth at some level.

In Question 6, conversation continued to be about feelings regarding the BCC. The column graph (Appendix E) under the title, “The Practice of the Church Covenant,” Table 6 and 6.2, shows that seven of thirteen said they had committed to putting the covenant into practice. Five of the discussion groups practiced the covenant to some extent, while only one confessed to not practicing it at all.

Questions 7 and 8 dealt with challenging the members to discuss their overall feelings about the Mt. Olive Congregation and about their future. In Question 7, they discussed how they felt about Mt. Olive continuing with its present form of traditional worship. In Appendix E under the title, “Mt. Olive’s Traditional Form of Worship and Ministry as a Congregation,” Table 7 and Figure 7, the pie graph reveals that ten of thirteen did not foresee the Mt. Olive congregation existing if it continued present traditional practices. These ten also shared a willingness to change and explore alternatives.

Question 8 was similar to Question 7 because it involved “commitment” to change. During this part of the discussion, all thirteen agreed that, not only was change necessary, but that they were also willing to commit to change, although these commitments were not reached lightly. These results can be seen in Table 2, showing a rundown chart in Appendix E. The pie graph in Figure 8 in Appendix E shows that all thirteen members in the group were willing to commit to change.

Overall Evaluation on Understanding Group Discussions

The conversations in Step 2 of the missional change model (understanding) were a continuation of what the group members were learning from their feelings in awareness from the step. When asked about modeling the gospel mandate from Matt. 28:16–20, five of thirteen felt the church was doing a good job modeling the Great Commission. The pastor, however, believed that the reason these five felt that way was because of the new outreach program inspired by the leadership. The pastor was most concerned, however, about the five who did not agree. Three of thirteen believed that the congregation was not modeling the Great Commission for a lack of being spiritually led. The latter three, along with the five who believed the membership was not a good model, suggested that this was due to losing faith in the way traditional worship and ministry were being conducted. Christian ministry, when governed by the Holy Spirit, will expand beyond the local congregation. The Mt. Olive traditional form of worship was exclusive at best, leaving little or no opportunity for them to serve at their best. The project manager concluded that the answers from Question 1 in Steps 1 and 2 revealed this truth.

The discussion that centered around how the Mt. Olive congregation was perceived in the Pine Ridge neighborhood was necessarily expounded upon. To serve a community effectively, the local congregation needed to show themselves as part of the people who lived there. In both the awareness and understanding group discussions, the participants reported that the Pine Ridge residents thought extremely well of the Mt. Olive congregation. This was largely due to the outreach program at Mt. Olive, which had begun prior to the project.

After touring the neighborhood, the pastor was inspired to encourage the congregation to do something special for them. The idea was for the Mt. Olive congregation to reintroduce themselves to the residents. This first began as an exploratory exercise. This is why Question 2 in the awareness and understanding group discussions was relevant. The responses to the question in both steps helped members bring clarity to the meaning of ministry. Questions 3 and 4 in Step 2 (the missional change model) were more personalized. The questions were about members being actively involved in the functions of ministry and naming the obstacles that might be hindering them. Most members agreed that they were fully functional in general worship and ministry. Only two stated that they desired to be active but that work schedules and academic involvements abroad hindered them.

Responses to Question 5 presented a conundrum, in that the results in the graph showed a near-split of those involved working with youth. It was puzzling because more volunteers were needed to work with the young people in the congregation. The youth ministry was important, and the need for workers was great. They agreed that they must work to find strategies and to schedule time to be available to work with the young people.

Seven respondents stated that they practiced the BCC, while five within the group of thirteen said they observed it to “some extent.” The project manager discovered in evaluating the responses that, for the most part, faith in the BCC was consistent. The project manager believed this because, within the congregation’s 130-year history, in at least fifty of those years, they had been indelibly indoctrinated in the covenant’s basic biblical structure. Questions 7 and 8 of the group discussions, however, overwhelmingly

revealed the participants acknowledging, for the sake of the congregation's longevity, that something must be done. Most members, while conducting the study, expressed to the pastor a willingness to embrace change as necessary. Some expressed a desire to become more involved, especially working with the youth. At this stage of the project, the pastor observed that the responses from the awareness and understanding group discussions prepared the participants to evaluate them together. The responses were compelling enough for discussion.

Before the participants moved to Step 4 of the missional change model (evaluation), the pastor prepared a course for the participants entitled, "God and Mission." The purpose of the course was to expose group members to the theological and biblical origins of mission.

Evaluation of the Class on God and Mission

The schedule for the course on mission was broken down into two class sessions (Appendix B), each of which was conducted on a designated Sunday. The classes were scheduled for one hour each. Theology and mission comprised the first part of the course. On the following Sunday, a similar course was presented on mission, but this time it was from a biblical perspective. The participants willingly responded to both courses. All participants were eager to take notes. Responses came to the online worship leader that the courses were refreshing. The eagerness to learn gave validity to some concerns respondents expressed in the group discussions. For instance, in Questions 3 and 4 of the understanding group discussions responses, there were strong showings in favor of Bible study, worship, and attendance ("Members Involvement in Bible Study," column graph, Figure 3, Table 3). In response to Question 4 in the awareness group discussion, the

teaching ministry was viewed more as a weakness rather than one of Mt. Olive's strengths ("Strengths of the Congregation," Table 4, Figure 4). The course on mission exposed a truth that Mt. Olive would welcome advanced theological and biblical classes rather than their current curriculum.

Evaluation of the Group Discussions

Step 4 of The Missional Change Model

The Sunday following the course on mission, all group participants met online with the project manager. The time for this meeting was agreed upon by all the groups. The purpose of this meeting was to come together to evaluate what was learned from the group discussions. After prayer, the project manager reviewed the analysis from the awareness and understanding group discussions with everyone. In this meeting, the project manager and group members deliberated regarding the participants' feelings about the direction the congregation was presently navigating. The groups discussed current values and practices in light of their present-day social surroundings. The pastor saw the discussions as positive because, as the discussion progressed, group members were not being as reactive but took on the mindset of communicating for clarity. The positive note was that they explored the issues up for discussion thoughtfully.

In this meeting, everyone agreed to evaluate specific areas that they felt drew major concerns. These areas of concern were the BCC, youth ministry, and the outreach program. In reference to the BCC, they knew this would be a major point of elaboration. This is because of Mt. Olive's long history with the BCC. For them, it was not the Bible, but it was scripture based. The pastor understood that, for the indefinite future, the BCC would remain their mental model.

Group members in the meeting now began to focus on the youth. While discussing the youth, a connection was made. The correlation was allowing youth to lead in the area of worship. The project manager viewed the group making a connection as a positive result of discussing the subject matter carefully and thoughtfully. They agreed to experiment; the group became excited and was willing to try. Members of the group reasoned that this experiment would require training for the youth and those working with them. Due to COVID-19, however, it was agreed that this experiment would be put on hold until the pandemic subsided. The other area of concern was the outreach program, which, overall, was highlighted as a strength. This was the only area of ministry the group members agreed to do as an experiment within the following week. The group decided the outreach program would be carried out by a ministry team, which was divided into two distinct operations—the prayer team and the exploratory team.

The evaluation process was a learning experience for both the project manager and the group members. The pastor learned that the group discussion helped members vacate the traditional “roller coaster” of activity long enough to voice and address their concerns. Before the discussions, the spiritual atmosphere around Mt. Olive was stale. The first two steps of the missional change model helped this congregation to put the mental brakes on church functions. The good thing here was that group members were addressing issues vital to the Mt. Olive congregation. Evaluation at this point was good for this congregation, but it needed to continue.

The Experiment

The experiment (Step 5 of the Missional Change Model) began the following week after the evaluation meeting. Based on the positive responses that the outreach

ministry received from the Pine Ridge community, group members voiced ideas to further bless the neighborhood through implementation of the team ministry idea with the prayer team and the exploratory team. The prayer team was comprised of those with physical health issues, such as being unable to walk far enough and long enough to visit with neighborhood residents. The task of the prayer team was to pray for the safety of the team and the success of the exploratory team to learn about conditions in the area. The exploratory team was made up of three individuals. This exercise was conducted on a Saturday at noon, and the experiment lasted for two hours. The goal of the exploratory team, as church representatives, was simply to walk and greet people. The key mission strategy when conversing with residents was to listen carefully. Before approaching the residents, the exploratory team prayed, then walked, and greeted residents. A key point included in this experiment was that the ministry team was not to be reactive but, rather, to learn by observing and listening to the residents. The point was to allow the Holy Spirit, through the residents and observation, to reveal ways to serve effectively.

The team listened to residents voice their concerns. The project manager did not show it but felt overwhelmed by the enormity of residents' concerns. Resident elders were afraid of the youth. Drug use was just as prevalent in Pine Ridge as in any major city. Residents that associated the team with the church avoided team members. The community elders also voiced concerns about the irresponsibility of young mothers not properly rearing their children. When the experiment was concluded for that day, the project manager had the following assessments. The first assessment was that, if Mt. Olive were going to help facilitate change in Pine Ridge, the ministry team needed to commit fully to doing this. Second, the exploratory team realized that due to the systemic

problems voiced, these team outings must become a permanent part of the Mt. Olive ministry. Finally, the ministry team must become incarnational, meaning, become part of Pine Ridge. To be the conduit by which the Holy Spirit would change lives, the Pine Ridge people needed to see the Mt. Olive congregation as their own.

Commitment

Step 5 of the Missional Change Model

After the experiment was conducted, the exploratory team reported their findings to the group members the following Sunday. The prayer team reported that prayer was made for the exploratory team at noon. This meant that all prayer team members dedicated this time to intercede for the community and the team. The exploratory team reported their findings from observation and chatting with residents in Pine Ridge. The suggestion about spending more significant time in the community was made to the group. This was a test for group members, because the enormity of Pine Ridge's problems caused members to look inward. Each one did soul searching, looking for obstacles that would be a hindrance to ministering in this community.

While facilitating this group discussion, the pastor did not rush the moment. He felt it was time for the group members to count the cost, to weigh for themselves if they would commit to working in the community. Finally, no one fully agreed to commit, but decided to take small active steps toward this area of outreach ministry. Also, everyone agreed that, since the group discussions in the change model helped them air their concerns and learn from others, they wanted to continue them. They were willing to continue listening and sharing with each other.

The project manager concluded that their desire to continue was promising. Spiritual change is a process; therefore, continuing to work with the others, rehearsing Steps 4 and 5 of the change model, was a good step. The pastor concluded that Mt. Olive had committed to a continuation process in awareness and understanding that was incremental to the change process. For Mt. Olive, the missional change model was an open door to explore wherever the Holy Spirit would lead.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The goal for missional living is traveling in the direction where the Holy Spirit leads. As pastor of the MOMBC for eleven years, observation revealed that this congregation was unaware of their place in missional ministry. The Mt. Olive congregation was a traditional fellowship located in Crockett, Texas. The pastor took note that the congregational members had settled for a traditional worship cycle, while approaching worship services in a stoic manner. Most of the membership faithfully attended worship services because this is what was expected; it was tradition for them. Mt. Olive was comprised of a loving people who truly loved God. The pastor realized, however, that Mt. Olive needed to rediscover its true purpose as members of the body of Christ. The challenge for the pastor was discovering a way to get the congregation to transition into a missional community.

The pastor was convinced that the way for this congregation to understand their purpose in missional life was to reexplore their mental values about worship and ministry and to challenge them. Doing this would put Mt. Olive on course, redefining their purpose as it relates to the plan of God. The pastor believed that the way to do this was by introducing the Mt. Olive congregation to a five-step missional change model process. This missional change model is outlined in Roxburgh and Romanuk's book, *The Missional Leader*. The missional change model's five-step process—awareness,

understanding, evaluation, experiment, and commitment—was conducted through group discussions. When the pastor introduced this five-step process to the congregation, sixteen members readily agreed to go through the process. It is necessary to note that the project was conducted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, this project could not be conducted in Mt. Olive's sanctuary as originally planned. The sixteen participants agreed that they were more comfortable doing this project online using Zoom online communications in family groups.

Family group settings were more comfortable conducting discussions in their homes. The pastor learned that participants felt this way because of how they might be characterized for expressing how they felt. Members in these group settings felt freer to express their true feelings and convictions among members of their own family. In retrospect, the pastor came to acknowledge that conducting the project this way was the best way to obtain results for the purpose of effective communication. Participants feeling free to express themselves may have been more difficult had the group discussions not evolved into this format.

From the pastor's perspective, it must be noted that facilitating the project with individual family groups was surprisingly a challenge. This is because the pastor, before the pandemic, visualized the group discussions taking place in the church sanctuary. In the building, the pastor envisioned a more personal, hands-on approach of the entire process, but this did not happen. The pastor came to the realization that effective leaders inspire others and share leadership responsibilities with them—in this case, members took turns facilitating group discussions for approximately eight months.

The project unfolded as follows. All communication followed a chain of command. The project manager explained the five-step missional change model to the membership online. All materials, such as questionnaires and copies of the BCC, were emailed to the online worship director by the project manager. The online worship director ensured that these materials were emailed to all participants. The project unfolded and family groups began to dialogue. The discussions were not rushed.

Careful attention was given to what was perceived as Mt. Olive's mental model. The pastor suspected that Mt. Olive's mental model about worship and ministry was shaped by the BCC. Based on the statistics compiled in the awareness and understanding group discussions, the pastor's suspicions were proven valid. It was the pastor's intention that the group discussions would move the participants to read and assess the covenant carefully. The BCC is a biblically based doctrinal statement on how Christians should conduct themselves in worship. In general, there is nothing wrong with this, but, after carefully viewing this document, it did not fully inspire the pastor to allow the Holy Spirit to have free course in moving the life of a local congregation to evolve into an emergent congregation. Although the results from the group discussion revealed that the covenant was still relevant, they also proved something else. The group discussions helped participants openly address concerns about worship and ministry.

During the communicative dialogues, everyone learned that they were expressing the same feelings as others. They voiced a low spiritual morale in worship. In the discussions, they addressed concern for the youth. The pastor was not surprised to review the information the response group members received from the community about the outreach program. The outreach program began as a simple experiment designed for the

purpose of spiritually stimulating the Mt. Olive congregation. It was an exercise to arouse the congregation's purpose in ministry. By this time, the participants had gotten to the third step of the project evaluation and realized that they were open to exploring ways of establishing an effective outreach program.

The overall perspective was that the congregational experience of going through the five-step missional change model was positive. The missional change model challenged the participants to look deeply within themselves and to reevaluate certain beliefs and practices. It also helped them to reflect on the fact that, as a part of the Christian Community, they have a God-given responsibility to serve their local community. The question was whether Mt. Olive would agree to go through the missional five-step process outlined in the book, *The Missional Leader*. The answer was yes, they did.

Although the members completed the process, the project manager felt that they had not totally transformed into a missional community. The pastor felt, at this point, that the process pointed members of who had participated in this study toward missional change and that those within the congregation who had completed the five-step process had been exposed to the necessity of change and in order to remain open minded. The participants' exposure to this five-step process caused them to openly acknowledge the problems they faced as a congregation, which could not be ignored. The participants were open-minded to the extent that they were willing to continue meeting from time to time in order to rehearse the steps of awareness and understanding.

The positive outcome from Mt. Olive participants' exposure to the five-step process was the motivation to continue personal soul-searching. They were willing to

reevaluate actions and practices through open communication and to access them together. Above all, they learned many ideas from the courses given about God and mission and learned that the Holy Spirit is the sole director in the church's function in the community. Furthermore, the course helped them understand that they must spiritually seek the will of Almighty God together for clarity as to how best to serve each other and the neighborhood.

The following was the pastor's perspective from this project. Leadership is to inspire change by freely expressing their convictions and modeling them before the people of God. Effective leadership is sharing leadership responsibilities with others. In the Old Testament narrative, the advice that Jethro gave to Moses of sharing responsibilities with the tribal elders of Israel validates this point (Exod. 18:14–24). The pastor's mental model of Christian ministry, in a sense, was different from that of the Mt. Olive congregation. Being in the Baptist denomination from childhood, the BCC was recited by the congregation and then explained in detail. The pastor in his early years, and for the most part of adulthood, accepted this doctrine as illustrating good biblical conduct among believers of the Christian faith. The evolving moral and social systemic problems within the African-American community, however, challenged the pastor's view of current traditional practices within the local African-American church. The growing irrelevancy of the African-American community toward local congregations alarmed the pastor. While continuing to observe African-American preachers losing the respect of neighborhood residents, but also with the parishioners they served, the pastor was called to reevaluate certain beliefs.

While the BCC fosters good, Christian, Bible-based practices, it also promotes a sort of exclusivity, of exercising the faith within the household of faith. From the pastor's point of view, what the document lacks is the theological and biblical information that offers instruction for the Christian church's place in the mission of God. If it had that, the church would focus more on the will of God and service to others. The pastor's mental model is reflected in the following: African-American churches have lost touch with residents of their local neighborhoods. They are no longer viewed as a source of inspiration and hope. African-American churches must evolve from traditional forms and methods of ministry by being more open to the Spirit as opposed to following tradition. Therefore, the Christian church in general, while remaining true to core, theological convictions based upon scripture, must be living examples in the congregation and in the neighborhood. They must do this by being open to hearing God together within the congregation for his direction. By reintroducing themselves in the community, they can learn and become familiar with residents, and learn to communicate or translate the love of Jesus Christ in a way the local neighborhood will understand.

The pastor learned in leading the Mt. Olive congregation that being differentiated is positive. The pastor had accepted Mt. Olive's mental model as it had been understood; however, the social changes and problems that reshaped the pastor's mental model remained a core conviction. While the project manager respected the congregation's present view of the BCC, he continued leading by inspiration. The pastor's confidence was restored from three key observations as a result of project work. First, the Mt. Olive congregation, through the group discussions, learned to acknowledge problems they had openly. Second, during the discussions, they were willing to further dialogue and

challenge those problems. The pastor believed this was a progressive step for them because they were unsatisfied with their present practices and activities. Third, again, they were willing to continue the five-step process of the missional change model through ongoing meetings and discussion from time to time.

The project developed differently than expected, but the benefits should be long-lasting. The project director hopes that other rural, African-American churches might also benefit from the work done at Mt. Olive in Crockett, Texas, and that participation with the Spirit of God in God's mission in a variety of contexts will allow for outreach and youth ministry in areas of Texas and around the country where learning to engage in missional ministry and lifestyles are so desperately needed.

Appendix A

Mt. Olive Outreach Program

Mt. Olive Outreach Program



Pine Ridge Residents



Serving the Pine Ridge Residents



Mt. Olive Showing Some Love



Pine Ridge Neighborhood



Working Together with a Purpose



Ministry Outing



Ministry Team



Neighborhood Residents



Appendix B

God And Mission: Lesson Plan for Mt. Olive

God and Mission

Lesson Plan for Mt Olive

Baptist Church Congregation

Class on Mission

<i>Title</i>	God and Mission
<i>Subject</i>	The Theological, Biblical Origin of Christian Mission
<i>Author</i>	Course given by Pastor Joe L. Anderson (Project Manager)
<i>Grade level</i>	Basic Bible class for Christian Congregation
<i>Time duration</i>	2 Cass settings/ 1 Hour each
<i>Overview</i>	Exploring the meaning of mission and its theological origin. Using biblical references form Old and New Testament to study missional activity before and beyond the birth of the Christian Church.
<i>Objective</i>	To familiarize the class with the true meaning of biblical, Christian mission. To help, by gaining insight of the church's place and role in the mission of God. Learning that living a missional life, uniquely identifies them as a missional community (kingdom of God) serving humanity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
<i>Materials</i>	Bible, NIV Books “The Missional Church in Perspective” and “ Introducing the Missional Church” (Theological Reference Material)
<i>Activities and procedures</i>	Due to Covid 19, Classes will be conducted online through Zoom. These classes are divided into 2 class lectures online. 1 st Class, August 22, 2021 Defining the meaning of Christian Mission (Sending) Explore the Origin of Mission (Missio Dei) Explain the Theological of Mission (Trinity)

Biblical References, OT, Gen 45:8, Ex 3: 10-15, Jer 1: 7, Eze 2: 3

2nd Class, September 5, 2021

Brief Summary of 1st class (Meaning of Mission, Origin and Theology)

Introducing New Testament Narratives to validate the extension of mission activity within the Trinity to the Christian church.

Biblical References, Lk 4:18, Jn 7: 16, 6: 29, 3: 17, 1 Jn 4: 9-10 (Jesus)

Matt 10: 16, 28: 16-20, Mk 16: 15-17, Jn 13: 20, 20: 21

Conclusions

At the end of this 2- class course, each participant is giving a brief oral report (before evaluation phase) what they have learned.

Appendix C

Analysis from Group Discussion Questionnaires

Analysis from Group Discussion Questionnaires

Step 1: Awareness

Member A

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we do not model the early church.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of regarding Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge), and is it favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Favorable, due to new outreach program, but presently unfavorable due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of our skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Not enough

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: During Sunday worship

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: In our financial responsibility to the church

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: No. We are not.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: It does, we need to do a better job putting it into practice.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: COVID-19 and doing worship on ZOOM!

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: I'm in prayer for my church.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: Pleased with the ministry, but not with worship.

Member B

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: We do not genuinely follow the model, it's rushed. We don't minister enough to neighborhood elderly.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge), are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Somewhat favorable since we've started ministering in the neighborhood. But we're lacking in church worship.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Pastoral leadership has encouraged the use of our skills.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Good outreach program (feeding Pine Ridge residents). Making visitors feel welcome. Sunday School teaching.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: A willingness to change, must move from being so traditional.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhoods?

COMMENT: We attempt to work with youth, but it's not working out well. We don't involve them in our ministry work.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it does, but we have gotten away from following it.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: It could be better. We are too traditional.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: My concern is that Mt. Olive may no longer exist, due to lack of church growth and the age difference in our membership.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: I'm not satisfied, we must put more of ourselves into it.

Member C

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: We lack teaching on doctrinal issues.

2. Being a party of the neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge), are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Good community involvement. Favorable.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and neighborhood?

COMMENT: Would love to be allowed to use professional skills in personal financial management.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Our outreach program, Providing food in the Pine Ridge community.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: More teaching on doctrinal (Biblical) issues related to social living.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: Our congregation must improve on mentoring our youth in general.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other, and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: We are lacking in our responsibility to take the church covenant serious. It does challenge us.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: We need more personalized worship instead of the traditional protocol.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olives future?

COMMENT: Serious commitment to Bible study

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: We to take worship and ministry more serious as the early church.

Member D

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Our ministry does not model the early church as far as in the neighborhood. But we do model it among ourselves.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: The church presence in the past has been view favorable, until the presence of COVID 19. We used to support other sister church traditional activities.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: On some occasions, they encourage me to get involved and user my skill.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Some of us are strongly committed to church attendance.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: Sincerity in worship and praise

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we are not effectively ministering, to youth in our congregation, nor our neighborhood.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: The Baptist Church Covenant does challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Presently, there is little due to COVID 19. We have Bible study or Sunday School via ZOOM.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: I'm afraid Mt. Olive may become non-existent, especially if COVID 19 lingers.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: I am grateful for our ministry; however, worship needs improvement.

Member E

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we're not good models within the congregation, but we did in our neighborhood outreach program.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Unfavorable

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, of passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: We need to improve, in encouraging those to use their skills, especially the youth.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Worship attendance.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: Getting more people to attend service.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we are doing nearly enough!

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other, and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it does.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Fellowship and worship are falling off, not good.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: Afraid we won't have someone to carry on as many of our members are aging.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: No.

Member F

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: In some ways, but not fully.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: We used to be favorable in the neighborhood until COVID 19. We no longer support other local churches.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood.

COMMENT: Yes, they have.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Sunday Morning Worship

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: We need better attendance. We need to allow the Holy Spirit work through us in praise and worship, not being so time structured.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those in the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Somewhat, but not enough.

7. Does our Baptist church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it teaches us to be good Christians and work with others.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Not good, due to COVID 19.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: Who will become Mt. Olive's future, and who will carry it on?

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: No

Member G

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Our work in the community (Pine Ridge residents) models the great commission. However, this is not true in our congregation, all the teaching is done by the pastor, we are not broken down into classes.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: We used to be favorable in the neighborhood when we fellowshiped with other churches. We don't support others the way we used to.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that might be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Some do not respond favorable to such encouragement.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Sunday morning worship, but some are absent during Sunday School.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: Staying within the scheduled time frames for Sunday School and Morning worship.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Even though trying to be a good role model, we're still lacking in ministering to our youth.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it does.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Worship has fallen off. Even before COVID 19, we still needed improvement.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: That our Church may close down for good.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: No, I'm not satisfied, we need more teaching about life, coping, daily living. We need more than what our Sunday School curriculum offers.

Member H

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we're not. We don't spend enough time in the neighborhood to help others. We don't involve our children in ministry as we should.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Favorable in the neighborhood (Pine Ridge) and community. But COVID 19 has hindered progress in our ministry.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, they have.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Sunday morning worship and helping others monetarily that seek the churches help.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: By doing more in the community (Pine Ridge). Fellowship with sister churches in the area, to share and learn from them.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, they are encouraged by leadership, and they are taught how to conduct the worship service, but there is more we can do to train them in active ministry.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it does, but we don't practice the covenant well enough to model the early church according to the book of Acts.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: The congregation isn't putting their whole heart into the praise and worship experience.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: We don't put enough time and energy into our children. We they grow older they will leave and not return. We don't invite others to our fellowship the way we use to.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?
COMMENT: No, I'm not satisfied, because we should always be looking for ways to improve. That is how we grow as a ministry.

Member I

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Mathew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: We should be more active in our outreach. Not just be in the building on Sunday.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Favorable

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: I feel they have been encouraging.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: We feel strongest in our worship service (Uplifted and Inspired).

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: We need improvement in worship and Sunday school attendance.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: We can do more.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other, and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, I feel like it does.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: In one aspect, we come together and worship like family.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: Our Church growth.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: At present, yes, because I love my church.

Member J

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, we model it by our work we did in the neighborhood and by being taught the word.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Our inviting the Pine Ridge to free weekend cookout, has given Mt. Olive a favorable rating in the neighborhood.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: All I know is, that I'm inspired my grandfather who is presently the head musician. I'm inspired by him to want to exercise my talents.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: We come together to make projects happen.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: We need another timeframe for a more advanced bible study.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, I believe we do.

7. Does the Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it does, because the membership looks out for the other.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Our strength presently, is continuing to come together via Zoom.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: I hope the pandemic does not discourage our membership.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: Yes, I am.

Member K

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, we do, with our ministry to the neighborhood (Pine Ridge).

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: Favorable because the people of Pine Ridge were grateful for our presence and our actions.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, I have been encouraged to do more.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Those who are faithful in Sunday attendance.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: Praise and Worship in area of music.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, we allow our children to participate on youth Sunday. But there is more we can do.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other, and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: It looks like God is definitely in our praise.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: Keeping the church going beyond our lifetime.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: Yes.

Member L

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: We model it in our teaching ministry.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: When we ministered to the residents in the Pine Ridge projects, they were very please, when we were ministering to them.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, I am encouraged in attendance and to participate more. My family tries to work well with pastoral leadership.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Everyone is welcomed with open arms.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: We need improvement in youth leadership.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we are not, but we have presently done better, than we have in the past.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other, and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: It is, somewhat, but should focus more on Jesus Christ.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Needs to improve with praise and worship.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: That the church will last beyond our children and their children.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: Yes, because when I leave service, I feel I have been revived.

Member M

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, we model it in the sense of biblical teaching.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: From my observation, the Pine Ridge community speaks very highly of Mt. Olive.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, the leadership has encouraged to be more involved.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: In helping others, and faithful attendance.

5. In your opinion, where do feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: More unity in decisions and participation.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, we work well with our youth, however, they need to be involved in the community.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, it does.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: Very Uplifting.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: My deepest concern is Mt. Olives continued spiritual growth.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: Yes, I am satisfied.

Member N

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28: 16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, we model the gospel mandate, in the area of sound biblical teaching.

2. Being a part of the local congregation, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: It is favorable, due to the brothers ministering in the Pine Ridge community. Also because of the biblical teaching.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Leaders have been encouraging. But more personal expression of love and genuine concern would help others to be more willing to come share what they have.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at their strongest?

COMMENT: Our congregation is strongest in our attendance, being a place to serve and worship.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: We need improvement in forming committees to work in several areas in ministry. Strong active male figures to work with our children on their spirituality and self-esteem.

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: No, we are not. We need more people working with our youth, in our congregation and the neighborhood. The youth need creative activities to be involved in. They more training about responsibility.

7. Does the Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Not all aspects of the Church Covenant challenge us. However, the biblical teachings of Jesus I believe are more centered in teaching us how we should live as followers of Him.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: It is good, could be better in the area of music / Praise and Worship.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: Will our children be committed to worshiping at our church. Maintaining strong leadership.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?
COMMENT: Yes, I am, because I sense we are committed to Jesus. There still could be some improvement, starting with me giving 100%.

Member O

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: To a certain extent we are, this is because have just begun an outreach ministry in the Pine Ridge area of Crockett.

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?

COMMENT: I am a part of the Mt. Olive ministry, but don't live there. But the feedback is that is favorable.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes, leadership has encouraged us to use our skills to best benefit our congregation and the community.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

COMMENT: Serving in the neighborhood and our teaching ministry.

5. In your opinion, where do feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

COMMENT: Be more active in taking the gospel to the neighborhood.

6. As a congregation are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

COMMENT: We effectively work with our youth, but not in the neighborhood.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

COMMENT: Yes.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: We are ok, but not at our best. Would like to see more people in service.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: That our congregation will not last another 20 or 30 years.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?
 COMMENT: No, the pandemic has hindered our fellowship, but thankful we can still worship online.

Member P

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?
 COMMENT: We don't model it whole heartedly. There's much about us that needs to improve.
2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community, are they favorable or unfavorable?
 COMMENT: Since we began an outreach ministry in the Pine Ridge area it has been mostly favorable.
3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?
 COMMENT: Yes, the leadership has, although some members remain skittish about participating in ministry.
4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?
 COMMENT: In our outreach ministry to Pine Ridge residents and teaching ministry.
5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?
 COMMENT: Commitment to Bible study, being more active in prayer. Praise and Worship.
6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?
 COMMENT: We attempt to with our youth, but it is just not enough. And we are not active enough with the neighborhood youth at all.
7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?
 COMMENT: The Church Covenant focuses a great deal maintaining unity within the body of faith. But gives little focus on serving those who are non-believers. So, my answer is yes and no.
8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

COMMENT: It could greatly improve, with more commitment to treat it seriously.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

COMMENT: That if we don't take our present status seriously, we'll no longer be a Congregation.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

COMMENT: No, I'm not, because as a congregation, we're not taking it serious enough.

Analysis From Group Discussions Questionnaire

Step 2 Understanding

Member A

1. What reasons would you give why Mt. Olive as a whole is not a strong living example of Jesus's command to the church found in Matthew 28: 16-20?

COMMENT: Because we are not whole heartly giving our all to God.

2. If the Crockett community, in your opinion, has a favorable view of the Mt. Olive congregation, what reasons would you give why they feel that way?

COMMENT: Because the ministry team reached out to everyone, giving to those who were in need. We gave, not expecting anything in return.

3. Have you personally made attempts to improve in the areas of worship, attendance, Bible study and the outreach program; if not, what reason would give?

COMMENT: Yes, I have tried, meeting in the sanctuary and in the community.

4. Worship, Ministry (serving), and Bible study require individual commitment; is there anything hindering you?

COMMENT: No, not at all.

5. The youth of Mt. Olive need spiritual nurturing; are you involved in working with them; if not, why?

COMMENT: Not often, but I'm willing. I want them to be involved in ministry. I want them to grow spiritually.

6. The Baptist Church Covenant is a written document of Bible-based practices on how the church should function. Does Mt. Olive put the covenant into practice, if not, why?

COMMENT: In some areas we do and some we don't.

7. Will Mt. Olive's traditional form of worship and ministry help the church to continue as a congregation, and if not, are you willing to change?

COMMENT: No, our traditional ways of doing things will not help us survive as a congregation. We must be willing to accept change and learn.

8. If change is necessary for Mt. Olive, are you willing to commit to change?

COMMENT: Yes, I am.

Appendix D

Awareness Graphical Presentations

AWARENESS GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION

1. As an example of Jesus Christ commissioning the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20, does our ministry presently model that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood?

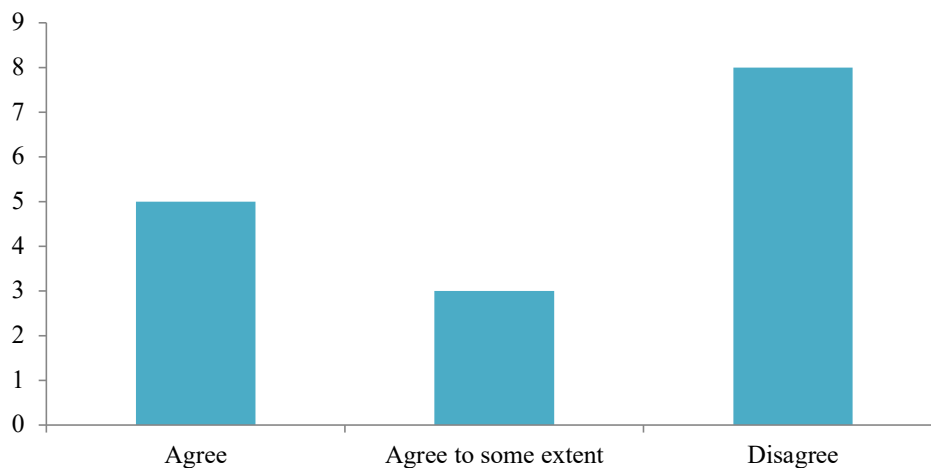
Our Ministry As Compared to That of the Early Church

The researcher wanted to know the views of the respondents on the whether our ministry mirrored that of the early church in ministry to its members and the neighborhood.

Table 1: Whether our ministry presently models that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood

Response	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree
No. of respondents	5	3	8

Figure 1: Whether our ministry presently models that of the early church in ministry to ourselves and the neighborhood



Majority of respondents stated that our ministry presently does not model that of the early church. A few (5) completely agreed that ours modeled that of the early Church

2. Being a part of the local neighborhood, what have you observed or been made aware of about Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge), are they favorable or unfavorable?

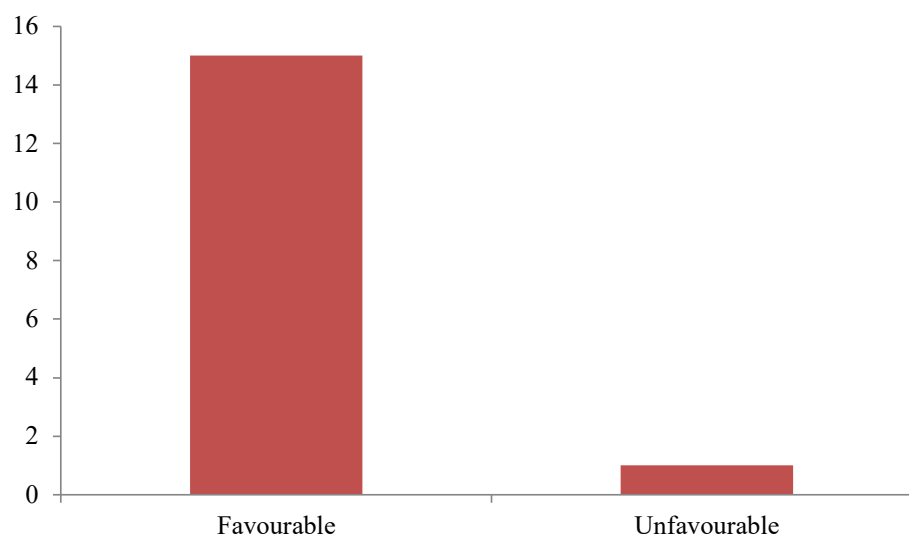
Presence of Mt. Olive in the community (Pine Ridge)

Respondents gave their responses on overall presence of Mt. Olive in the community (Pine Ridge) as follows.

Table 2: Responses on Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge)

Responses	Favorable	Unfavorable
No. of Respondents	15	1

Figure 2: Responses on Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge)



From the data analysis, Majority of respondents felt that Mt. Olive's overall presence in the community (Pine Ridge) was favorable. However, one responded that it was unfavorable.

3. Have the leaders of our congregation encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood?

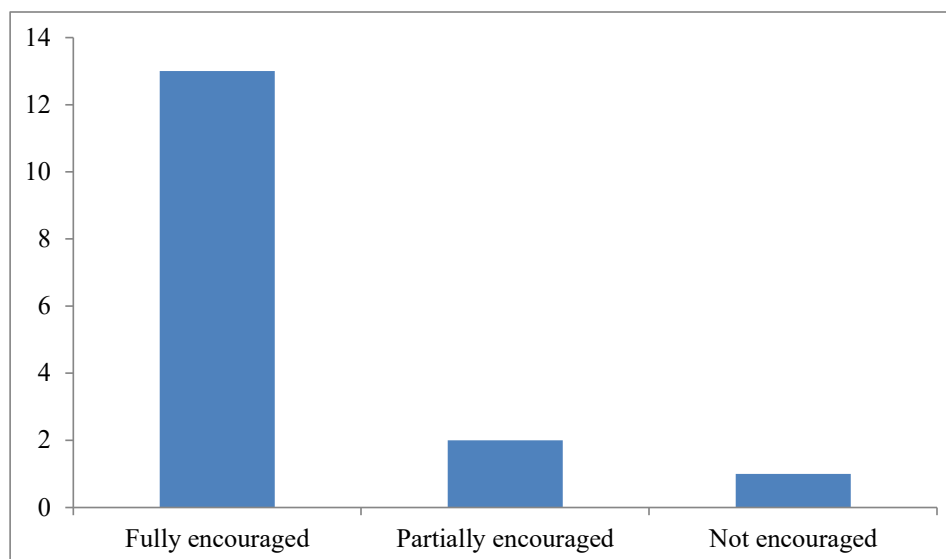
Impact of Congregation Leaders on Skills, Gifts, or Passions

Respondents were asked to give their views whether congregation leaders have encouraged any of your skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood

Table: Responses

Respondents	Fully encourage	Not encouraged	Partially Encouraged
No.of respondents	13	1	2

Figure 3: Impact of Congregation Leaders on Skills, Gifts or Passions



Majority of respondents felt that leaders of the congregation had encouraged skills, gifts, or passions that would be helpful, benefiting the congregation and the neighborhood with one response stating they had not been encouraged.

4. Where do you feel our congregation is at its strongest?

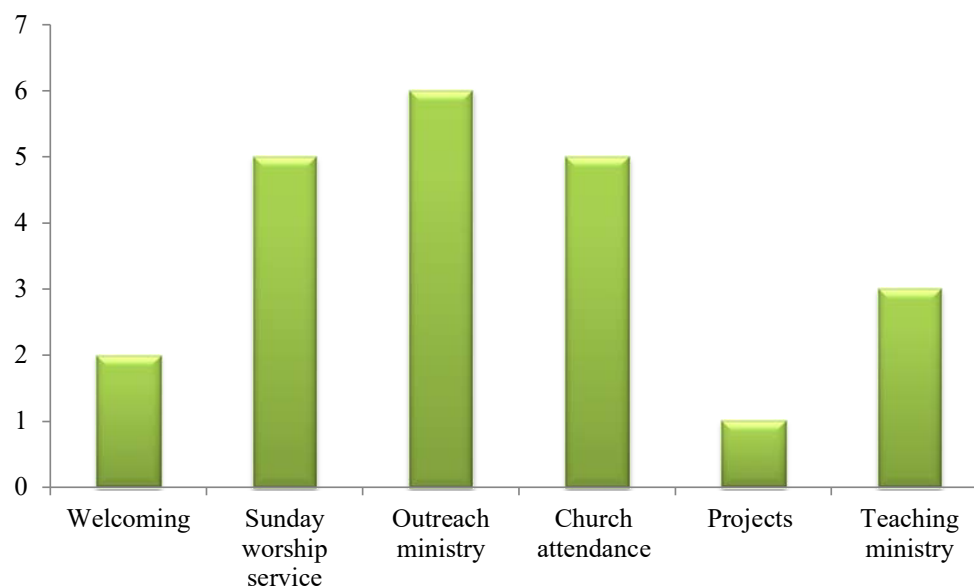
Strength of Congregation

Respondents were requested to give their feelings on where our congregation is at its strongest.

Table 4: Respondents feelings on where our congregation is at strongest

Response	No. of Respondents
Welcoming	2
Sunday Worship Service	5
Outreach ministry	6
Church attendance	5
Projects	1
Teaching ministry	3

Figure 4: Respondents feelings on where our congregation is at strongest



Respondents gave their views on the part that the congregation is at its strongest. Majority stated that the congregation was strongest in outreach ministry, Sunday worship service, and church attendance. Others responded that this was in teaching ministry, welcoming, and projects carried out.

5. In your opinion, where do you feel Mt. Olive needs improvement?

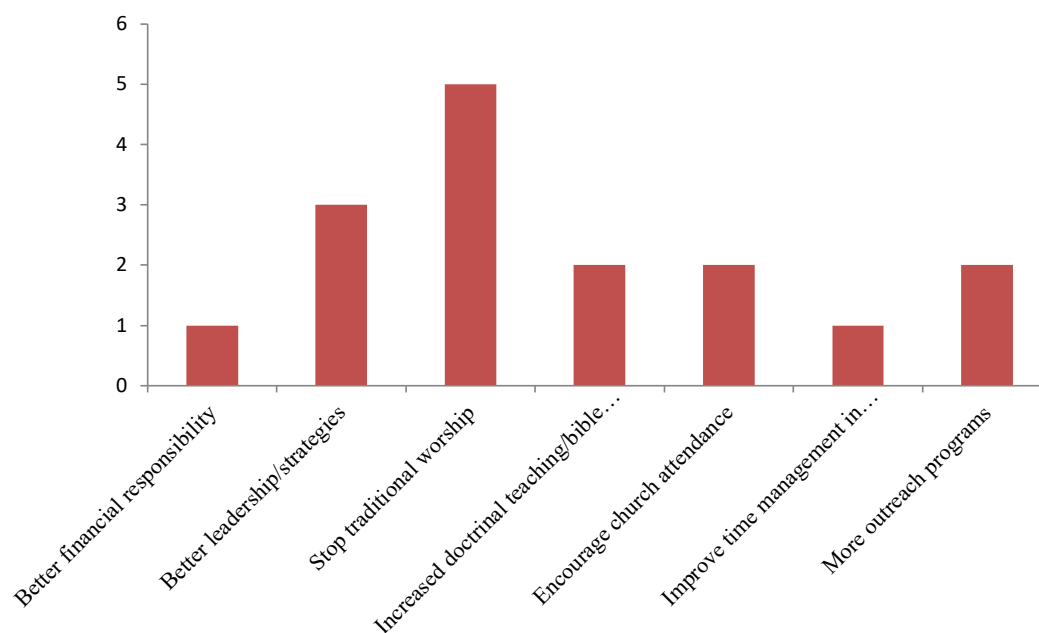
Improvement needs for Mt. Olive

The researcher sought to know opinions on where Mt. Olive needs improvement. The responses were as below.

Table 5 : Where Mt. Olive needs improvement

Responses	No. of Respondents
Better financial responsibility	1
Better leadership/strategies	3
Stop traditional worship	5
Increased doctrinal teaching/Bible study	2
Encourage church attendance	2
Improve time management in Church services	1
More outreach programs	2

Figure 5: Where Mt. Olive needs improvement



From the data analysis, It was the feeling of the respondents that the needs for improvement included better financial responsibility, better leadership/strategies, stop traditional worship,

increased doctrinal, teaching/Bible study, encourage church attendance, improve time management in church services, and more outreach programs

6. As a congregation, are we effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood?

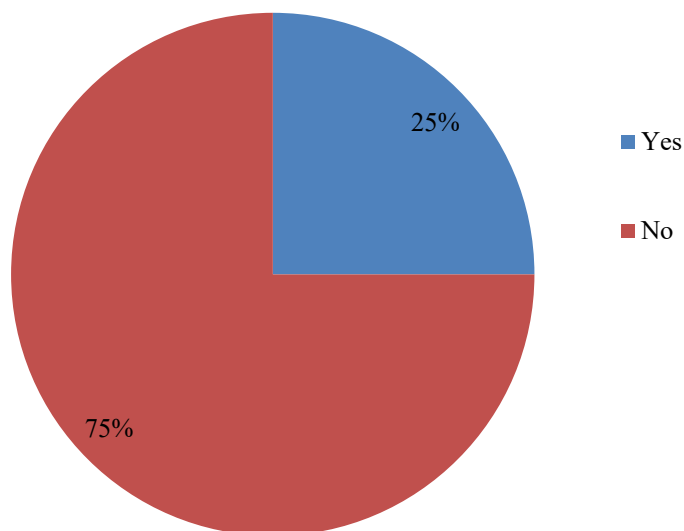
Effective Ministry to Our Youth and Those within Our Neighborhood

The researcher sought to know whether as a congregation there was effective ministry to our youth and those within our neighborhood.

Table 6 : Responses

Response	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	4	12

Figure 6: Whether as a congregation we are effectively ministering to our youth and those within our neighborhood.



Most of the respondents believed we were not ministering to the youth and neighborhood. However a few felt that as a congregation we are on course with this.

7. Does our Baptist Church Covenant challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood?

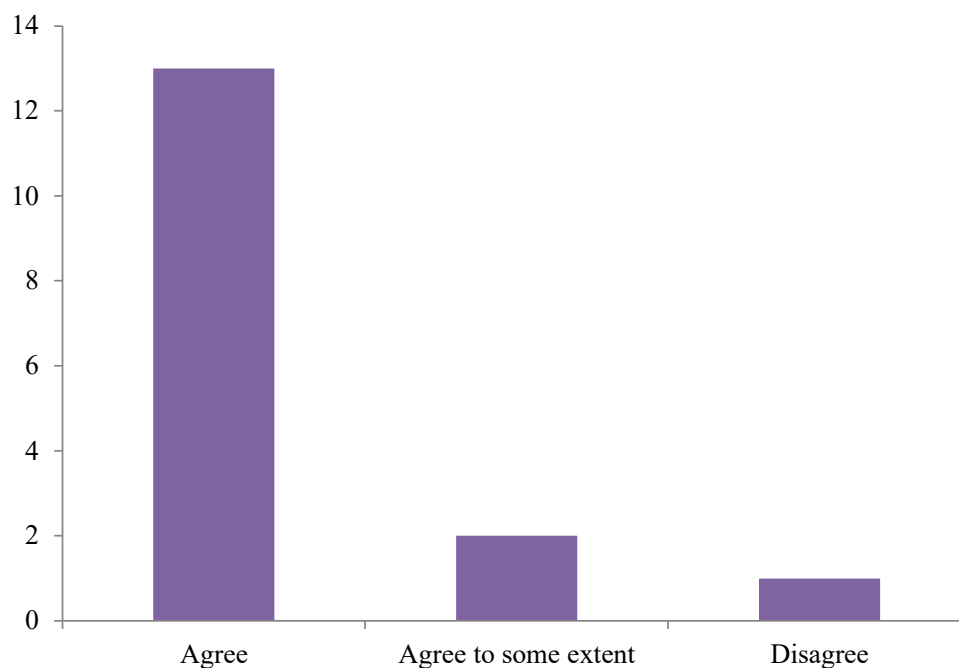
Impact of the Baptist Church Covenant

Respondents were asked whether the Baptist Church Covenant challenged them to serve each other and the neighborhood.

Table 7: Whether our Baptist Church Covenant challenged us to serve each other and the neighborhood

Response	Agree	Agree to some extend	Disagree
No. of Respondents	13	2	1

Figure 7: Whether our Baptist Church Covenant challenged us to serve each other, and the neighborhood



Majority of respondents agreed that the Baptist Church Covenant did challenge us to serve each other and the neighborhood. However one respondent believed it did not.

8. What does fellowship and worship look like at Mt. Olive?

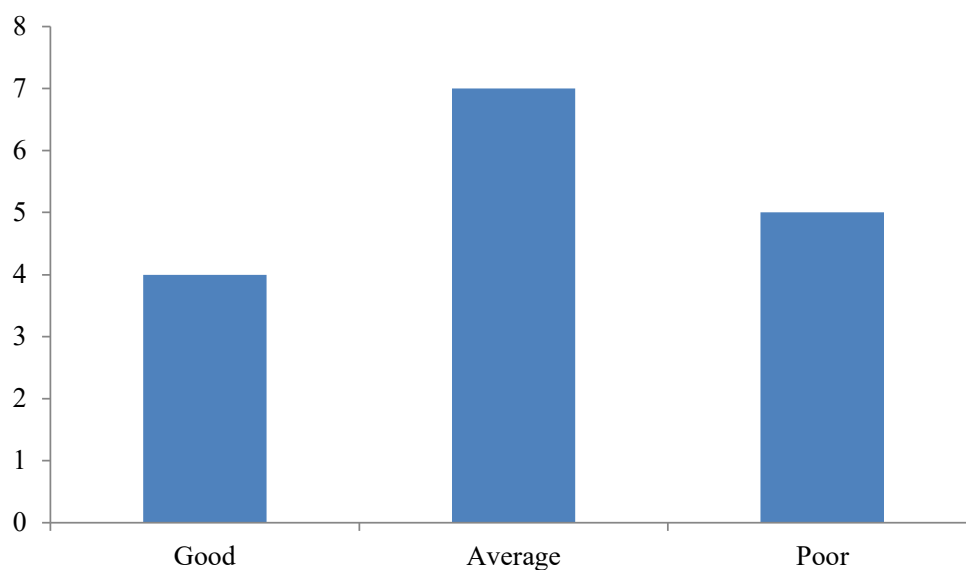
The Look of Fellowship and Worship at Mt. Olive

When asked about the fellowship and worship at Mt. Olive, the respondents state it looked as follows.

Table 8: Responses on the look of fellowship and worship at Mt. Olive

Response	Good	Average	poor
No. of Respondents	4	7	5

Figure 8: Responses on the look of fellowship and worship at Mt. Olive



From the data analysis, the majority believed that the fellowship and worship at Mt. Olive was average and needed improvement. This was followed by another group who felt it was poor. Only a few responded that the same was good.

9. What are your deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future?

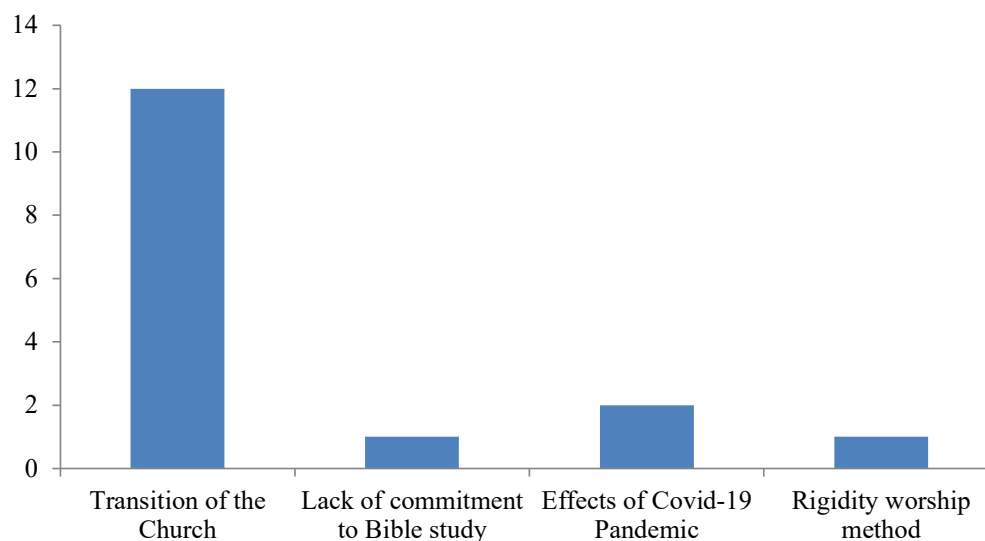
Concerns On Mt. Olives Future

The respondents were requested to specify their deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future. They responded as follows.

Table 9: Respondents deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future

Response	No. of respondents
Transition of the Church.	12
Lack of commitment to Bible study.	1
Effects of Covid-19 pandemic	2
Rigidity to worship method	1

Figure 9: Respondents deepest concerns about Mt. Olive's future



All the respondents had deep concerns on the future of Mt. Olive. The majority had concerns on the transition of the Church. They stated problems on lack of commitment to Bible study, effects of Covid-19 pandemic, and rigidity to worship method.

10. Are you satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry?

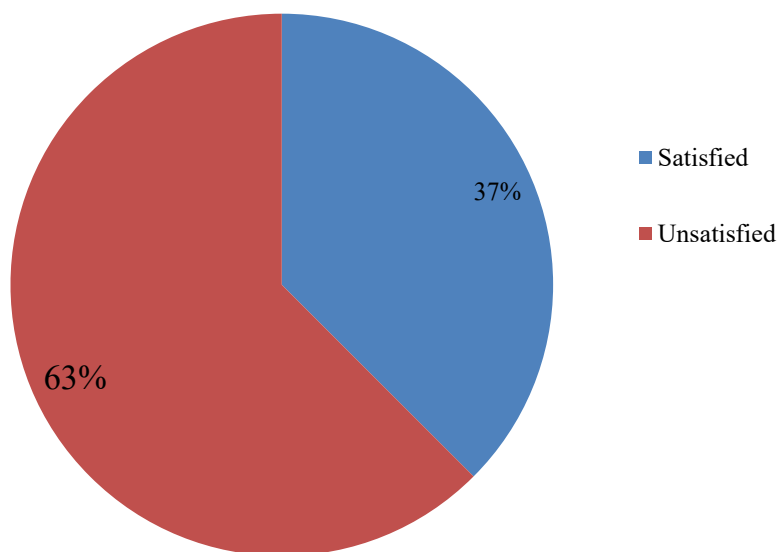
Satisfaction on status of worship and ministry

The researcher sought to know whether the respondents were satisfied with our present status in worship and ministry or not.

Table 10: Whether respondents are satisfied on status of worship and ministry

Response	Yes	No
No. of respondents	6	10

Figure 10: Whether respondents are satisfied on status of worship and ministry



Majority of the believers (63%) who responded to the questionnaire indicated they were unsatisfied with the status of worship and the ministry. Only a handful (37%), were satisfied. The members gave opinions that there was a need to improve and change the way the ministry and worship goes on.

Appendix E

Understanding Graphical Presentations

UNDERSTANDING GRAPHICALS

1. What reasons would you give why Mt. Olive as a whole is not a strong living example of Jesus's command to the church found in Matthew 28:16-20?

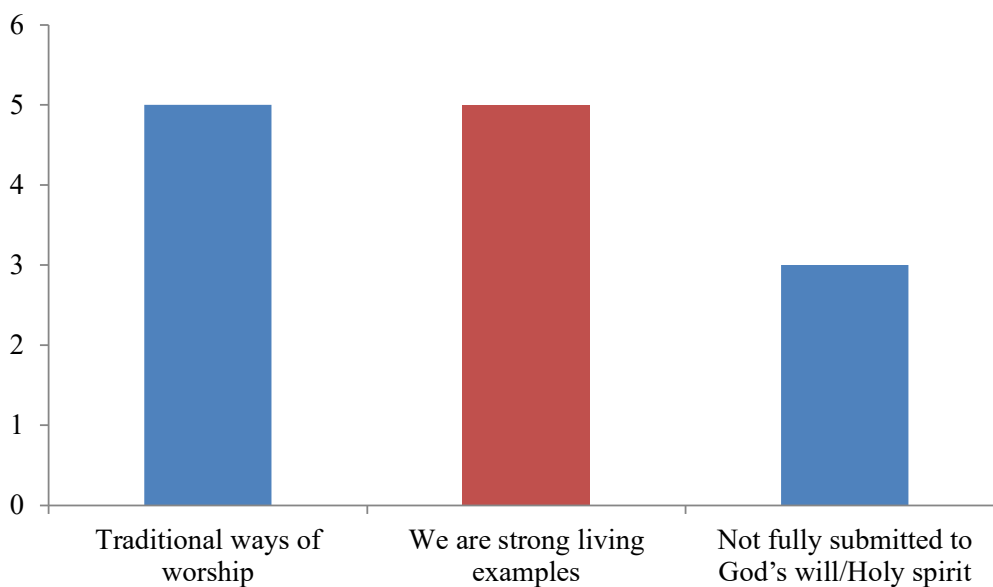
Mt Olive and Jesus's Command to the Church (Matthew 28:16-20)

Respondents were asked to give reasons why Mt. Olive as whole was not a strong living example of Jesus's command to the church found in Matthew 28:16-20.

Table 1: Reasons why Mt. Olive as whole is not a strong living example

Response	No. of Respondents
Too traditional in ways of worship	5
We are strong living examples	5
Not fully submitted to God's will	3

Figure 1: Reasons why Mt. Olive as whole is not a strong living example



Majority of respondents gave out reasons Mt. Olive as a whole was not a strong living example of Jesus's command to the church found in Matthew 28:16-20. They stated that Mt. Olive was too traditional in our ways of doing things and that the congregation was not fully submitting to God's will and the Holy Spirit. However, a number (5) responded that we were already strong living examples of Jesus's Command.

2. If the Crockett community, in your opinion, has a favorable view of the Mt. Olive congregation, what reasons would you give why they feel that way?

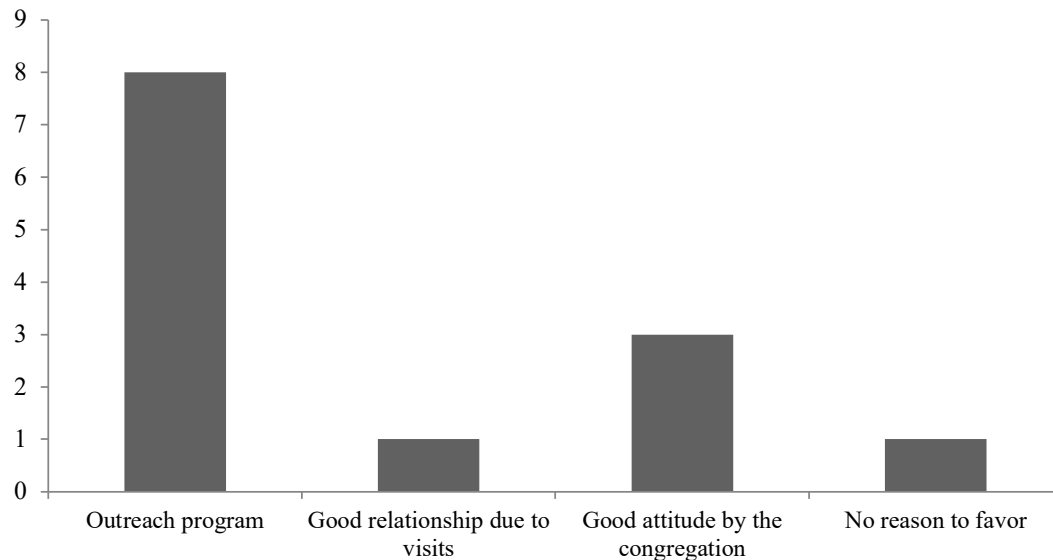
Reasons for Favorable View of Mt Olive Congregation in Crockett Community

Respondents were asked to give reasons why the Crockett community would have a favorable view of the Mt. Olive congregation.

Table 2: Responses

Response	No. of respondents
Outreach program	8
Good relationship due to visits	1
Good attitude by the congregation	3
No reason to favor	1

Figure 2: Reasons for Favorable View of Congregation in Crockett Community



A majority of respondents felt that the outreach program gave the congregation at Mt. Olive a favorable view in the Crockett community. Others gave out the reason as good attitude by the congregation while other stated good relationship due to visits. Only one responded indicated that there was no favorable view by Crockett community especially among the youth.

3. Have you personally made attempts to improve in the areas of worship, attendance, Bible study, and the outreach program and if not, what reason would you give?

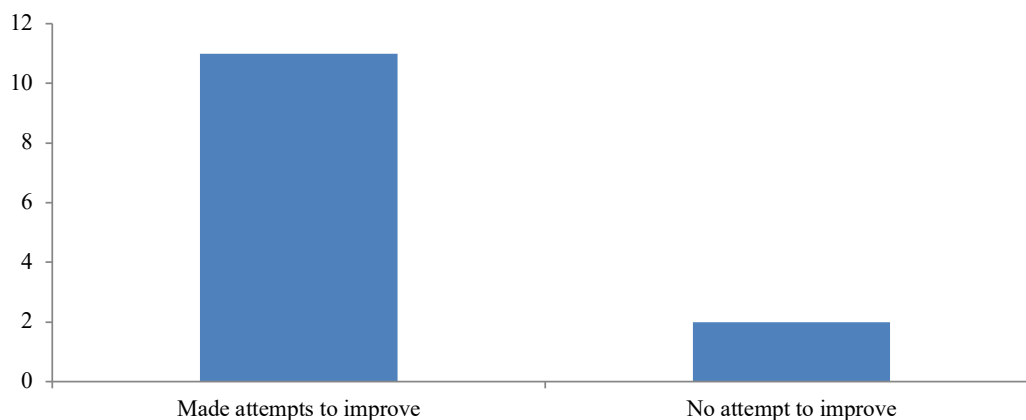
Member involvement in worship, attendance, Bible study, and the outreach program

The researcher sought to know whether respondents had made personal efforts to improve in the areas of worship, attendance, Bible study and the outreach program.

Table: Responses

Responses	Made attempts to improve	No attempt to improve, reason
No. of Respondents	11	2

Figure 3: Personal attempt in improvement in worship, attendance, Bible study, and the outreach program.



Majority of the respondents (11) have made personal attempts to ensure improvement in worship, attendance, Bible study, and the outreach program. Those who have taken steps to improve the above cited work as a hindrance.

4. Worship, Ministry (Serving), and Bible study requires individual commitment, is there anything hindering you?

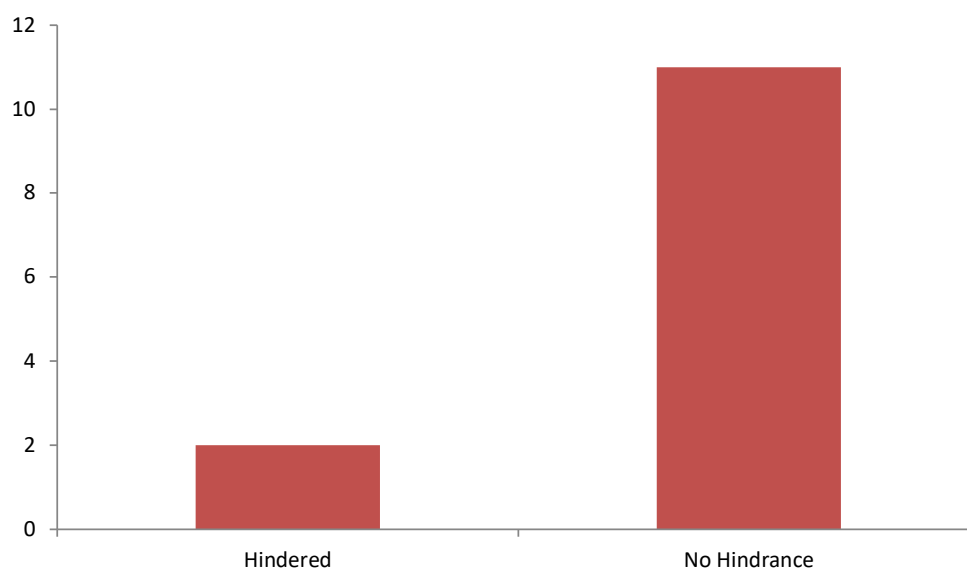
Individual commitment to Worship, Ministry (Serving) and Bible study

When asked whether there was anything hindering them from the above, they responded as follows:

Table 4: Whether there are hindrances in Individual commitment to Worship, Ministry (Serving) and Bible study

Responses	Hindrances	No hindrances
No. of respondents	2	11

Figure 4: Whether there are hindrances in Individual commitment to Worship, Ministry (Serving) and Bible study



Most of the members stated there were no hindrances in their personal commitment to Bible study. However, one member had an issue with maintaining concentration during online engagements while another needed to be encouraged to commit.

5. The youth of Mt. Olive need spiritual nurturing; are you involved in working with them, if not, why?

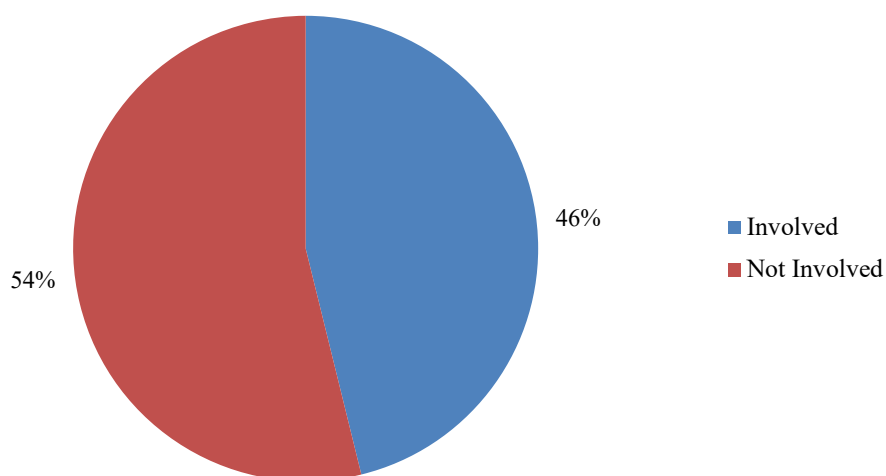
Member Involvement in Spiritual nurturing of the Youth at Mt. Olive

Respondents were asked whether they were involved with working with the youth or not.

Table 5: Member involvement in youth spiritual nurturing

Responses	Involved	Not involved, reason
No.of Respondents	6	7

Figure 5: Member involvement in youth spiritual nurturing



The majority of members (54%) are not involved in nurturing the young members in their spirituality. Some of the reasons given ranged from being among peers, work schedules, health, and physical challenges. Some members indicated their absence from the area made it difficult for involvement. However, (46%) responded they were actively involved in nurturing the youth in their spiritual growth.

6. The Baptist Church Covenant is a written document of bible-based practices on how the church should function. Does Mt. Olive as a whole put the covenant into practice, if not, why?

The Practice of Baptist Church Covenant

When asked whether Mt. Olive as a whole puts the covenant into practice or not, the respondents replied as table and figure below.

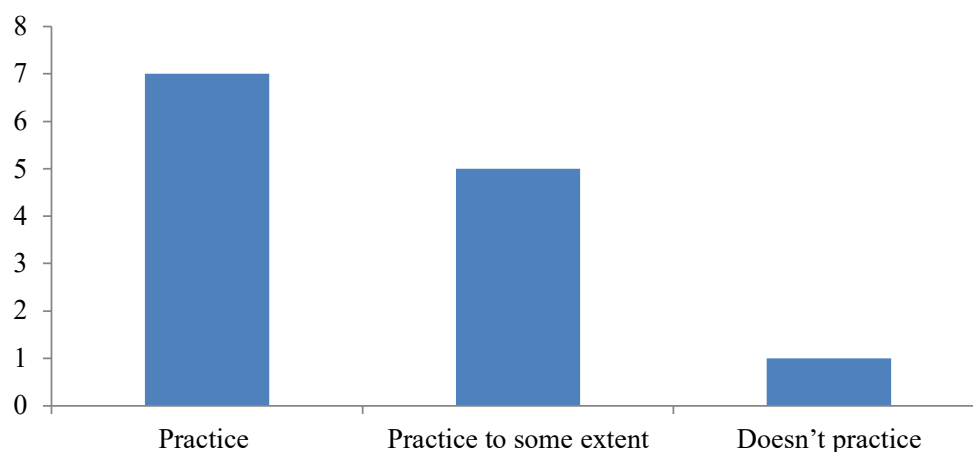
Table 6: Whether respondents think Baptist Church Covenant is practiced or not

Response	Practices	Practices to some extent	Does not practice
No. of respondents	7	5	1

Table 6.2 Reasons

No.	Reason why respondents think it is not practiced
1	Congregation does not take time to study it.

Figure 6: Whether respondents think Baptist Church Covenant is practiced or not



Majority of respondents believed that Mt. Olive as a whole did put the covenant into practice. One respondent however thought that the congregation does not take time to study it thus did not practice it.

7. Will Mt. Olive's traditional form of worship and ministry help us to continue as a congregation, if not, are you willing to change?

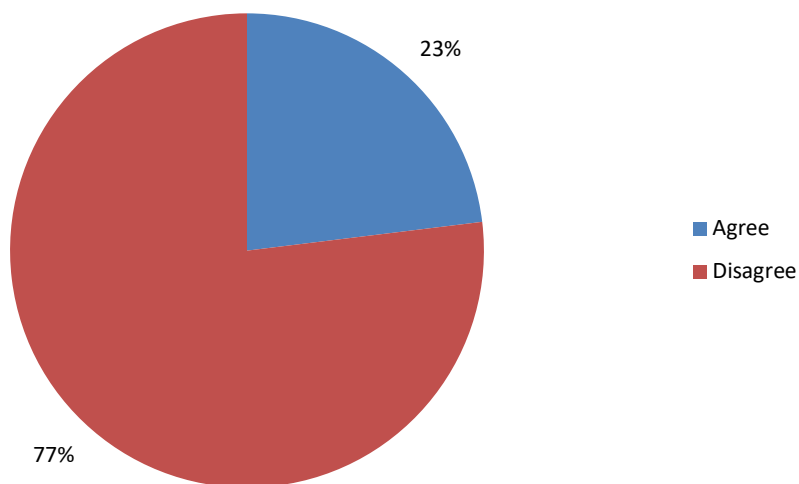
Mt. Olive's traditional form of worship, ministry, and continuity as a congregation

Respondents were asked whether the traditional form of worship and ministry would help us continue as a congregation. They were further requested to indicate if otherwise, whether they would be willing to change.

Table 7.1: Whether Mt. Olive's traditional form of worship and ministry help us to continue as a congregation.

Responses	Agree	Disagree
No. of respondents	3	10

Figure: Table 7.1 : Whether Mt. Olives traditional form of worship and ministry help us to continue as a congregation.



Majority (77%), of the respondents stated that Mt. Olive's traditional form of worship and ministry would not help us to continue as a congregation with only 23% of the respondents thinking it would not affect the continuity of the congregation.

Table 7.2 : Whether members have willingness from traditional form of worship and ministry

Respondent	Responses whether willing to change or not
1	We must be willing to change and learn
2	Did not say
3	Yes
4	Yes
5	Yes
6	Yes
7	Yes
8	Yes
9	Yes
10	Yes
11	Yes
12	Yes
13	Yes

All respondents were willing to change from the traditional form of worship and ministry with some willing to change as long as it will help.

8. If change is necessary for Mt. Olive, are you willing commit to change?

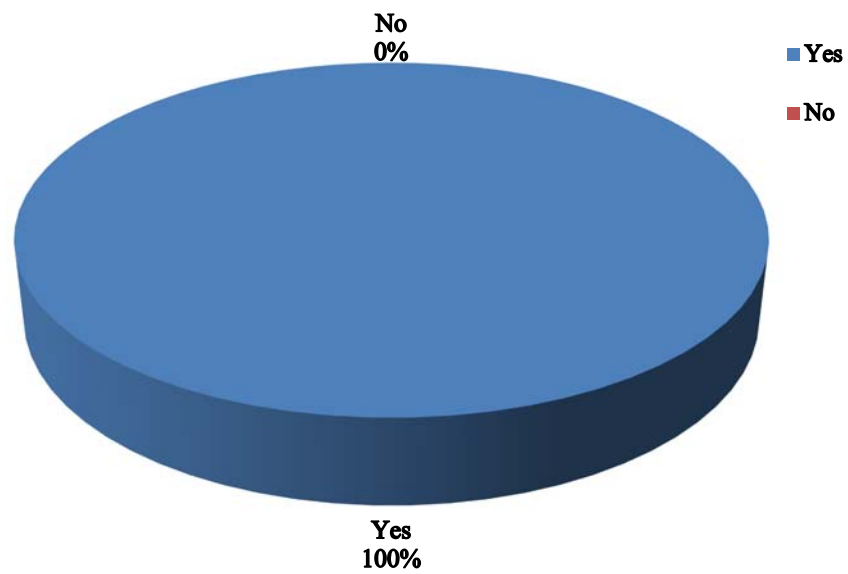
Member's willingness to commit to change at Mt. Olive

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were willing to commit to change, if the same was necessary for Mt. Olive.

Table 8: Willingness to commit to change at Mt. Olive

Response	Yes	No
No. of respondents	13	Nil

Figure 8: Willingness to commit to change at Mt. Olive



All the respondents in the survey agreed to make a commitment to change at Mt. Olive which was necessary to ensure continuity of the ministry.

Appendix F
Project Narrative Proposal

**Moving the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in
Crocket, Texas toward a Missional Mindset**

Project Narrative Proposal

“Missional” has been coined in recent decades to indicate the need of Christians and Christian churches to participate with God in God’s work in the world. The subject of this project will be to develop a missional team to model a missional lifestyle for the Mt. Olive Missional Baptist congregation by reexamining and demonstrating the ministry of Jesus within the Pine Ridge, an African-American community of Crockett, Texas.

The problem to be addressed is that the African-American community no longer views the African-American Church as a source of spiritual encouragement and a catalyst for effective social uplift. The pastor recognizes this problem from several years of observing the social conditions within the Pine Ridge community and the lack of black-church involvement to address this issue. The intent is to share these community concerns in the hope it will serve as a catalyst to explore the possibilities missional life offers. What will be necessary is to challenge the Mt. Olive congregation’s present mental model of mission ministry with a specially designed change process.

Mt. Olive’s mental model of ministry is based on the traditional view of the National Baptist Convention’s local church covenant document. The congregation’s (Mt. Olive) mental model is ministry and mission that focuses primarily on the spiritual welfare and conduct of the congregation. This means strengthening individual and congregational spirituality for everyday life (neighborhood) challenges through its

worship and teaching. Currently, this model of ministry does not effectively stimulate congregational growth nor address the systemic spiritual and social concerns in the Pine Ridge community. To lead Mt. Olive into missional life, it will be necessary to challenge the mental model of ministry. Leadership at this point is not overly concerned about Mt. Olive's numeric growth. The idea is to challenge the congregation's mental model on ministry to one that is open to the move of the Holy Spirit. Missional life only becomes possible when leadership and congregation are not entrenched in doctrinal traditions, but by the move of the Spirit. In order to accomplish this, the pastor proposes a project that will incorporate the change model outlined in the text by Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*. A five-step process is outlined in the text. Research will not only discuss the model but indicate how one may utilize the model to adapt to a particular local church. The results of this work will be evident in Chapter III of the Project Report titled "Action."

Ministry Setting

The ministry setting is the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas. The Mt. Olive congregation is about eight miles south of the town of Crockett. The town's population is about 6950 residents.

Mt. Olive is an African American congregation with a total of forty members. The entire membership lives within the city except for four members. Three of those members live in the town of Magnolia and the other in the city of Houston. The congregation's ministerial structure is as follows. The diaconate consists of four ordained deacons, one church secretary, one Sunday school superintendent, one Sunday school clerk, two

financial officers, and an administrative board of five people. The administrative board also serves as the pulpit committee.

The Mt. Olive congregation is a rural congregation that during the majority of its history, conducted worship only twice a month. This was normal for most rural African American churches in East Texas. However, in 1990, the congregation decided to extend worship to fulltime. Bible study, which is usually scheduled for Wednesday nights, was changed due to the work schedule of the pastor who is presently bi-vocational. Therefore, Bible study takes the place of Sunday School. Bible study is broken up into two groups, the adult group, and the youth group. All teens attend the adult class, while the youth group consists of ages twelve to five years. Since 2010, the current pastor has formed an outreach ministry program. Eight people operate this outreach program. The area of operation is the Pine Ridge community projects. These projects are a housing community within a low-income African-American neighborhood. The objective of the outreach ministry is to minister to the residents, by attempting to address whatever needs are necessary. There are, at least fifteen African-American congregations within the Crockett area; however, Mt. Olive is the only one to date to minister this way.

Project Outcomes and Measurable Assessments

The pastoral leader, who is also the project director, has concluded that missional life is best for a congregation because it allows for the Holy Spirit to be in charge of his activity through the congregation and in service to others. Therefore, the first outcome is to train the Mt. Olive congregation in a missional mindset through a specific change process based on the outline in *The Missional Leader*. During this period, spiritual bonding, enthusiasm, and commitment will be measured to evaluate the change process.

The desire is that the whole congregation will participate and welcome a transformation to missional life.

The second outcome is that, as a result of the training, the congregation will become united, not just in missional activity, but also as a whole. It is the hope that the Mt. Olive community will be transformed into a missional team. This change process will necessitate several spiritual disciplines, such as praying, studying, and fellowshiping together. The disciplines done together are to move the congregation to learning to seek the will of God together. During this period, team members will learn that God's will must be sought as a team, discover core values, learn to appreciate the value of others, and learn to listen to the other. Gauging the impact of this transformation will come through observing and documenting a three- to four-month period of the congregation's response and attitudes toward the group discussions and teaching. Afterwards, there will be a need for two weeks of preparation, after which the team will be engaged in a four-month outreach program in the Pine Ridge area. The outcome will be measured following the completion of an experiment in the community of Pine Ridge by the missional team.

The idea for the outreach program comes from the observation that the church has been absent in ministering to the outside neighborhood residents. The present, pathological, conditions that plague the Pine Ridge community, such as drug-infested areas, crime, hunger, teen pregnancy, and escalated high school dropout rate among African American teens, exist because the church has become in-grown rather than a physical presence to address these issues and assist in alleviating these concerns.

Therefore, Mt. Olive will prepare to reacquaint itself with community residents by scheduling an exercise called a "Walk About" to schedule weekend visits and reacquaint

the church with neighborhood residents. The purpose is to talk with residents one-on-one and explore their conditions. A key factor in this exercise is to listen to residents. By listening, the Holy Spirit will have the opportunity to reveal the best way to serve the neighborhood. The visits in the community are to show that God does care and wants them to live in the abundance of His kingdom.

This exercise will be scheduled for one weekend. In this exercise, the team will be divided into two groups—a prayer team and an exploratory team. The prayer team will spend one hour a day praying for the success of the exploratory team that will make the visits. The exploratory team will be divided equally for each weekend. This means that each weekend (Saturday), team members will walk and meet the neighborhood. At the end of each week, both the prayer and the exploratory teams will meet, pray, and assess what they have learned. There will be questionnaires for the team to relate what they have learned from this experience. The exploratory team will document the attitudes of residents to gauge their attitudes toward the church during this exercise in each outing. The team hopes to improve the community residents' attitudes about the church in general and to meet the needs of the community in more tangible ways.

Relevant History of Mount Olive Missionary Church

The congregation's history comprises 135 years that dates to the birth of the church in 1883. The church property consists of five acres. The property upon which the worship sanctuary rests was purchased from John Johnson for five dollars and a stipulation. According to the deeds to the church, the seller stipulated that if the Mt. Olive church existed, the property would belong to the congregation. If, however, the church ceased to exist, the property would return to the seller or family heirs. This deed

stipulation eventually brought problems for the Mt. Olive congregation after the seller's death including at least two attempts to burn the church down.

Throughout the church's years of ministry, from the time of its inception, there have been twenty-three pastors. There are no independent congregational by-laws, just the traditional Church Covenant that was established by the National Baptist Convention for the State of Texas.

Relevant Personal History of Ministry

The writer has been in the gospel ministry for over forty-five years. His church membership includes the Mt Herman Missionary Baptist Church, Holy Assembly Baptist Church, and Joy Baptist Tabernacle, which is presently called the Genesis Church. He committed his life to Christ at the age of fourteen and announced his call into gospel ministry at the age of sixteen. At the Mt Herman Baptist Church, he served in the youth choir and assistant aid to the pastor. In 1977, the pastor, along with the Mt Herman Congregation decided to publicly ordain the writer into the gospel ministry.

After graduation at the age of eighteen, he entered the U.S. Army. During his years of military service, he became a member of the Holy Assembly Baptist Church in Marina, California, and an assistant to the pastor. The writer was honorably discharged from military service in 1979 and reunited with the Mt Herman church family. In 1986, he moved his membership to Joy Baptist Tabernacle. He was licensed in 1999 and ordained in 2006 by Joy to assume the role of Assistant Pastor for Evangelism. At Joy Tabernacle, he also served as a Youth Bible Teacher for over twenty years. During the same time, he served as Intercessory Prayer Leader and Youth Pastor for one year.

As the Assistant Pastor for Evangelism, the writer was blessed with the ability to work with children and break the congregation into smaller teams to witness in the neighborhood. The writer loves to engage the community in order to listen and to search for new avenues to spiritually revive the community. The writer greatly enjoys teaching and working with youth groups as part of his duties as Assistant Pastor of Evangelism. At present, the writer has served as pastor of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas, for eight years.

Theological, Biblical, and Post-Modern Perspectives

The task of the project will be to validate the congregation's conversion to missional by drawing from three major subjects that are germane to the topic (mission) of interest. The relevant sub-topics are from theology, the Bible, and post-modern perspectives. The research will provide definitions of "missional" ministry from both theological and practical resources. The initial idea is to show that mission, at its core, is about God's active involvement in the affairs of human life. Research in theology will further prove this by exploring the dynamics of the Trinity. There will also be documentation to show a correlation between mission and its relation to the Kingdom of God. George Eldon Ladd distinctively summarizes a definition and connection between mission and God's kingdom in his book entitled, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.¹

In addition to this, Karl Barth lays a theological foundation for missional ministry reflecting on the inter-dynamics of the Trinity. Barth will show that, in reference to mission, God is the initiator. Roger Olson's *The Story of Christianity* draws information

1. George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 15-16.

from medieval theologians that stirs theological and practical creativity, to express the origin of mission.² David Bosch expresses mission as an act of participation within the Triune God-head. Bosch's use of the word "participation" show all within the Trinity modeling for the church an active participation in the restoration of humanity.³ In this study, Andreas J. Köstenberger will also further expound on mission by drawing a comparison a missional God described within the Triune Godhead and Christian believers.

The biblical aspect of mission gives valuable historical evidence of missional life. The writer intends to show that scripture shares just as much value in the interpretation of mission as theology reveals. In other words, the Bible historically dictates God's interaction with creation. Resources from both Old and New Testament scholars will be used for more informative insight into the topics of mission (missional) and the Kingdom of God. This historical background will explore Paul Hiebert's interesting correlation between theology, biblical history, and the U.S. Constitution along with documented U.S. case laws citing the dynamics of mission. The objective in this is to bring clarity to the origin of missional intent.

Furthermore, Hiebert's link serves, not as a guideline regarding how to become missional, but as a clear demonstration that missional ministry, theologically, is God-centered and that the history of humanity bears that truth.⁴ There is also vital information interlinking "mission" with the meaning of "Kingdom of God."

2. Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 199.

3. Jamie Swart, Scott Hagley, John Ogren, and Mark Love, "Toward a Missional Theology of Participation," *Missiology* 37, no. 1 (Jun 2009): 76.

4. Titie Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, "Missiology Theology," *Missiology* 34, no. 2 (Apr 2, 2006), 224-225.

An investigation will be undertaken to present resources from theologians and biblical scholars in the post-modern era. Such noted individuals as Leslie Newbigin and Michael Goheen will be used to make the case for a missional awareness in the 21st century church. There is a need to explore the communication barrier between church and the community and how to bridge this gap. In the article, “Can Public Theology Talk to Missional Theology,” the information is used to challenge the church to revolutionize its language in communicating the gospel of Jesus to the present-day community diverse in culture expression speech.⁵ The writer will use information from Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch book, entitled “RE JESUS,” to expound on the necessity that the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is the best example for missional life. The authors focus on the foundation of kingdom principles that Jesus lived and preached, and the postmodern icons demonstrated by them in their lifetime.⁶ In addition, as mentioned above, *The Missional Leader* will serve as a text to research and as a model to adapt for the change process to be designed for the project.

The refocusing on the biblical Jesus is to inspire transformation. That being the case, this paper will include comments from Tod Billing’s article, “The Problem with Incarnational Ministry.” Billing expresses that in the transformational process, to be Christlike, there is the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of “incarnation.”

5. George R. Hunsberger, “Can Public Theology Talk to Missional Theology,” *Cultural Encounters* 8, no. 2 (2012): 13.

6. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsh, *Re Jesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 64.

Billing's explanation is that believers do not become Jesus, but, through spiritual transformation, can become like Him.⁷

Project Overview

The writer is convinced that developing a missional mindset will help the Mt. Olive congregation become a more effective witness for Jesus Christ. The first observation is the need for this congregation to reestablish its ecclesiastical foundation based on the teachings of Jesus in order to biblically address the issues that exist near the church in a nearby African American community (Pine Ridge) in Crockett, Texas. The hope of this project is to lead Mt. Olive through a researched change process toward the ability to have a missional conversation that leads to a mindset equipping Mt. Olive to effectively serve each other and the Pine Ridge community. The steps to achieving project outcomes are two-fold: (1) to engage the congregation in a change process so that (2) the congregation may engage the community, working with neighbors within the community to find solutions to the issues that exist and are on-going.

Primary Project Resources

Primary resources include, first, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile's *The Missional Church in Perspective* that provides the theological roots of mission in a postmodern understanding. This book will be helpful to the congregation because the instruction regarding mission will be theologically based. The authors clarify that mission is foremost about God moving in the life of humanity. Second will be Alan J. Roxburgh

7. Todd J. Billings, "The Problem with Incarnational Ministry," *Cultural Encounters* 9, no. 2 (2013): 60.

and Scott Boren's book *Introducing the Missional Church*. This book describes what a missional church is like and the necessary steps toward transformation.

Missional transformation, although necessary, will need certain practices to insure longevity. After group discussions and missional classes, the desire is for the Mt. Olive congregation to become a missional team. Anne Marie Nuechterlien's *Building a Healthy Team Ministry* and Joseph Keller's article, "Five Group Dynamics in Team Ministry," which reveals five important concepts that are crucial to team members that will need to work together in harmony, work to solve solutions, and avoid personal burnout. These five dynamics will inspire a healthy appreciation for each other and the ministry they engage. Finally, the change process model, as discussed above, will be adapted from *The Missional Leader* by Roxburgh and Romanuk.

Procedural Outline and Timeline

The timeline for project development follows:

1. Meet with potential members for the formation of becoming a missional team. (June 2019)
2. Present a plan to the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church (July 2019)
3. Discuss and reexamine the present structure of the traditional procedures and practices for the church, in reference to their understanding of church mission and ministry. Develop a questionnaire measuring an individual understanding of what is mission for the church (third week July 2019)
4. Develop a teaching plan for team unity and mission ministry (August 2019)
5. Conduct discussions and classes on present traditional ministry, mission, missional ministry and ministry team formation (Sept–Nov 2019)
6. Evaluate class understanding and commitment to mission through questionnaire (first and second week of Dec 2019)
7. Schedule a missional training retreat for the purpose of exercising missional ministry in the Pine Ridge neighborhood of Crockett, Texas (Jan 2020).

8. The Mt. Olive missional team (congregation) will conduct a three-month missional exercise (Walk About) in the Pine Ridge community. Also, a team evaluation after each exercise. (Feb-Apr), each Saturday Weekend)
9. During the month of May 2020, all documentation of classes, training, exercise for the (Walk About), and questionnaire evaluations will be documented for the finalization of this project.

Organizational Structure and Resource Project

Chapter I will state the need for the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church to reevaluate its present understanding of mission and commit to transforming into a missional team. The purpose is to model a missional lifestyle for effective ministry in the Pine Ridge Community of Crockett, Texas.

The student intends to show how missional transformation will help Mt. Olive work through the problem of being spiritually and socially disconnected from the residents of Pine Ridge. The envisioned solutions to this problem will come through a spiritual recalibration based on theological and biblical study as well as missional training exercises, equipping Mt. Olive for faithful service. Measurable outcomes will be measured through commitment to the group discussions, classes, and exercise as well as the willingness to put into practice a new way of doing ministry.

Chapter II, the Research Chapter, will include a variety of topics, from theological, biblical, and practical perspectives. The student will present how mission is interconnected with the Kingdom of God, how a specific change model can be used to train a congregation in missional thinking, and how theological and biblical relevance is foundational to the ecclesial body.

Chapter III will describe the various aspects of this project, including written accounts of all participants involved. The chapter will list what was done, how, when,

and where. The topics in question will be how a traditional church congregation responds to the teaching of missional life, training as a team, and ministering in a local neighborhood.

Chapter IV will include evaluation of all questionnaires, group discussions, teachings classes, training preparation, and the missional exercise. The chapter will reveal the evaluative tools used to measure all statistical data involved.

Chapter V, Conclusion, will share what has been learned from this project, specifically from the project's initial stages to the exercise. The writing will expound on what learning tools and practices may have been more useful. This student hopes to use this project as a tool to teach other groups (congregations) in search of change.

Project Accountability

The student will receive permission for the project to begin from the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church Board of Trustees. The student's advisory team are Dr. Henrietta Campbell, DMin; Hattie Hamilton, Retired CPA; and Rose Hackett, School Teacher for Crockett ISD.

Project Profile

The project profile will contain all research material adopted for the curriculum for all classes, documentation of group discussions, and weekly evaluations. Questionnaires and samples of all evaluative tools will be included in a Project Report Appendix. Monthly reports of this project in each of its developmental stages will be reported to a supervisory team.

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